



CARE FOR CREATION AT BETHANY

A Ministry of the Religious of Jesus and Mary in Highland Mills, NY



Upcoming Events

October 21st - Seminar for Local Small Businesses (see pg. 8 for details and invitation)

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The fall often is seen as a time of ripening, harvest, and abundance. The members of Care for Creation at Bethany have been reflecting on the many exciting things that happened recently, grateful for the opportunity and growth that has occurred over the summer months. Our community has increased, we have held space for connections to be made within our existing group and brought new people in, and continue to discover new occasions to bring people together in communion with the abundance of Creation. We are very much looking forward to seeing how these new opportunities continue to grow and are happy to share some of the fruits of our summer labor with you.

While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.
- Genesis 8:22



Reflections on the Global Compact on Education

Earlier this summer, The Religious of Jesus and Mary hosted an International Meeting on Shared Mission in Mexico City. This event brought together lay people and religious representatives from all over the world to share, learn, and collaborate on the theme of the Global Compact on Education. The Care for Creation at Bethany Committee was invited to be a part of the delegation from the USA/Haiti Province. Our own, Kayel Conklin, went on behalf of our committee. Here are his reflections on the event.



Over the course of five days, I worked with educators and religious leaders from around the world who shared in the unique missions of the Religious of Jesus and Mary. Language was a challenge, but by listening and interpreting with our minds and hearts, we found ways of understanding each other. In the opening ceremonies, local children sang in their native language accompanied by traditional music. This set the tone for the event: listening to the voices of the children and youth will help us build a better world. Our methods of education may be different, but the goal is the same.

We reflected on the works of various schools and collaborators from around the world and divided into groups to share our unique missions. Some schools focused upon the education of youth in more traditional, academic situations. Others were educating young people less formally. Despite these differences, one primary focus of the gathering was to “put the person at the center.” We learned to be more aware of human vulnerabilities and to respond through ministry. Common struggles within the teaching space were identified. These included students lacking interest or motivation to study due to valuing material things over effort, overuse or misuse of electronics and social media, lack of empathy toward teachers or classmates, and parents not fully supporting their children’s education, whether it be due to their own heavy workload or overprotection causing distrust of the school’s teachings.

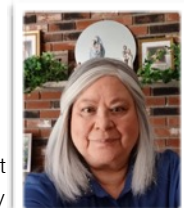
These issues can be countered by “working towards the centrality of the person” in such ways as:

- paying attention to the vulnerabilities of the children and youth,
- improving the participation of families through activities that focus on volunteering and teamwork,
- inviting families, youth and children into prayerful experiences to deepen their faith.





Committee Member Highlight



Louise

I have been married to my husband Lou for 52 years and we share three children, a daughter and twin sons, as well as six grandchildren. My greatest happiness comes from my interactions with my family.

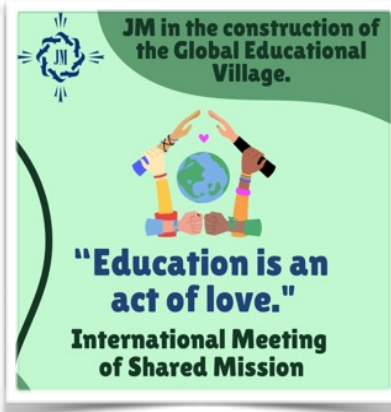
I enjoy baking and delivering their favorite foods to their homes, helping them with their homework, and being a significant influence in their lives. This connection feeds my heart and soul.

My work in Catechetical ministry started in 1988, when I volunteered my gifts and talents to the Religious Education program my children attended. This eventually became a part-time, paid position. After being an assistant for several years, a change in leadership led to my being offered a full-time parish position as the coordinator of the Religious Education. I entered into the basic leadership program and after 4 years, became a certified coordinator of Religious Education for the Archdiocese of New York. I was encouraged and mentored by many Sisters who saw something in me and fostered the woman I am today. Since then, I have been a Pastoral Associate, Coordinator of Religious Education, RCIA Director, Youth Minister, Adult Faith Formation Coordinator, and an Instructor for Sister Joan Curtin and Sister Teresita Morse in the Archdiocese Leadership program. On a few occasions, I was invited to teach in the Orange County Deaconate program. One of my gifts is bringing people together and calling forth their gifts to benefit the program, community or parish event. In my experience, people want to be involved in their parish, they just need to be asked.

I became a member of the Care for Creation at Bethany committee after a phone call from Sister Teresita. I felt my years of parish ministry would be a benefit to Bethany and the Religious of Jesus and Mary. At the present time, I am retired and being a part of this Care for Creation at Bethany committee is a blessing for me. I am grateful to be in the company of so many diverse and talented people.

In our conversations, we reiterated the need to include all those involved in an issue, so that all perspectives can be discussed. Feelings of regret, guilt or anger about a situation do not need to be a fixed conclusion. These can change by focusing on the positive points and outcomes of the situation. I found especially meaningful a quote from William George Ward, “The pessimist complains of the wind, the optimist hopes it will change, and the realist adjusts the sails.” We should all strive to be realists, and make adjustments to our situations rather than complaining about them or sitting back and hoping they will change.

As I reflect on my days in Mexico City, I am reminded of a quote from the Bible, “Mercy unto you and peace and love be multiplied!” (Jude 1:2). I hear it as a call to forgive those around you and go out into the world with peace in our minds and love in our hearts. Approaching the world in this way can help to “put the person at the center.” When moving forth with our ministry as a Care for Creation committee, we continue to do our best to keep those we are educating at the center of our work, recognize their vulnerabilities, and aim to include all those involved in the conversation to ensure the inclusion of many perspectives.



“The pessimist complains of the wind, the optimist hopes it will change, and the realist adjusts the sails.”
- William George Ward





What's New at Care for Creation at Bethany?

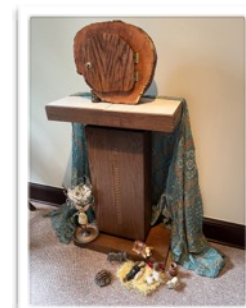
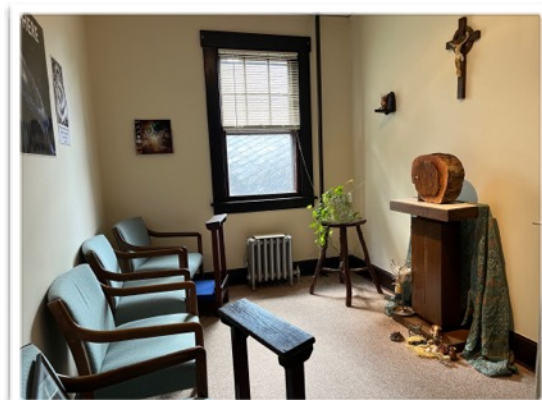
Outreach to Local Parishes

“The first step in healing the earth is loving her. This is fostered by enjoying and communing with nature. As we recognize that our own life emerged from the life-systems of earth and continues to live within the one web of life, we realize that we are all dependent on the health of our mother planet. The programs at Bethany will be given in the context of faith in a loving Creator God always at work for the sake of God’s beloved earth community.” (excerpt from Care for Creation at Bethany committee Goals)



In light of this goal, we have recently reached out to 250 Archdiocesan Parishes, inviting them to bring their staff, catechists, adult groups, and youth ministry programs to take part in Care for Creation at Bethany offerings. Through this invitation, we are committed to making Bethany a welcoming place where people can listen to their Creator God speaking to them through the natural world, commune with the Lord, and increasingly become, themselves, “Carers of Creation.”

If interested in bringing a group to the property or to learn more about what we offer, reach out to Louise Pisano at 845-541-1492 or email carersofcreation.bethany@gmail.com. See attached brochure at the end of the newsletter for programming details, pg. 11-12.



New Chapel at Bethany

As we continue to expand our services and grow new connections with the community, we are looking for new ways to bridge connections between nature, spirituality, and ministry. We recently redid one of the rooms in the main house to create even more open space to make these connections. This summer, the small Chapel of John 3:16 has been opened to give guests of all ages the opportunity to contemplate in private prayer the awesome reality that “God so loved this cosmos as to give us God’s only Son.” (John 3:16).

The wooden tabernacle was created by Charlie Whitehouse, facilities manager at Bethany. He used the trunk of a fallen tree which lived its whole life on the property and daily enriched life in our forest as trees always do!



Liaison with Woodbury Climate Smart

Care for Creation at Bethany is not the only “ecological/environmental start-up” in town! During the same time-period, Woodbury Climate Smart was inaugurated by Mayor Andrew Giacomazza. Recently, after a meeting at Bethany with the Mayor, Sr. Teresita and Lisa Hintze, the leader of Woodbury Climate Smart, met and both enthusiastically affirmed the “rightness” of a liaison. The goals of both endeavors, though different, are mutually supportive. The full Task Force met at the Care for Creation Center at Bethany on Sept. 16th to experience the property and to further explore ways of working together.



Climate Smart Communities (CSC) is a New York State program that helps local governments take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a changing climate. Woodbury Climate Smart Community Task Force goal is to “engage neighbors to build a community that is informed and actively working to combat the negative effects of climate change and to educate town citizens in how to create a healthier natural environment.”

We are looking forward to working with Woodbury Climate Smart in ways that support and further our shared goals.

(Note: Highland Mills is a hamlet in the town of Woodbury, NY)

Arbor Day Celebration Reflection

Earlier this year, we celebrated Arbor Day by planting an apple tree on the property and educating our friends and neighbors on the basics of planting and caring for trees, including the importance of compost and the necessity of stabilizing supports. The group worked together to dig a hole deep enough to cover the roots, but shallow enough to prevent root mold and decay. The tree was watered in and is slowly, but surely taking root in its new home.

After planting, the group took a Dendrology walk through the forests at Bethany and learned the Latin names and non-industrial uses for trees. For example, the shagbark hickory tree is used by bats for protection. The bark separates from the tree which allows the bats to crawl in those spaces. Being aware of trees and their purposes can change the way you engage with nature on your next walk!



Kid's Corner!

THE PUMPKIN PRAYER

Open my mind so I can learn about You;
🎃 Cut off the top 🎃
 Take away all my sin and forgive me for the
 wrong things I do.
🎃 Clean out the inside 🎃
 Open my eyes so Your love I will see;
🎃 Cut two eyes 🎃
 I'm sorry for turning up my nose to all You've
 given me.
🎃 Cut a nose 🎃
 Open my ears so Your word I will hear;
🎃 Cut two ears 🎃
 Open my mouth to tell others You're near.
🎃 Cut a mouth 🎃
 Let Your light shine in me so others can see.
🎃 Place a candle inside 🎃

MY HAPPY LITTLE PUMPKIN SHOWS
 HOW MUCH GOD LOVES ME!



A Prayer for Fall

Gracious and loving Creator of all things.

As summer winds down and another season begins, we thank you for being a constant we can rely on. We find peace in the routine of life that will never cease while the earth remains. As we enter into autumn and fall, the cooler winds drift in and the days grow shorter, draw us closer to you. Let us feel your warm and loving presence. You call us to be good stewards of this earthly home, strengthen us to care for your creation; forgive us when, through our greed and indifference we abuse its beauty and damage its potential. Empower us, through your Spirit to nurture and love the world You created that sings to your glory.

AMEN



Laudato Si' Quick Study

We continue our exploration of Laudato Si with Chapter 3, a more difficult section of Pope Francis' encyclical. Yet making the effort to immerse ourselves in its message and to let it change our hearts and ways is vital. Part of what makes it 'difficult' is its challenge to each of us; namely that the ecological crisis in which we find ourselves is rooted in our own human hearts.



The core of Francis' message in this chapter comes at the very center of the chapter: "There can be no renewal of our relationship with nature without a renewal of humanity itself." (118) The degradation of God's gift of creation to the point where we fear for its ability to sustain us is a manifestation of hearts that need conversion and salvation. "Our relationship with the environment can never be isolated from our relationships with others and God." (119)

Pope Francis exhorts us to see the false and dangerous belief that all our world's problems have merely technological solutions. Think the 'Catholic both/and. The right use of this world and technology requires an ethical framework and an understanding of the purpose of creation as it comes from the hand of God. Pope Francis calls us not to a Luddite disdain of technology, but a desire that any advances be guided by a right ordering of the value of the human person, creation, and God's intent for both. This will happen only with the conversion of our hearts.

Read chapter three after a prayer for the humility to change. Pray that all with take seriously the need to address the environmental crisis and its causes in our disordered hearts. Realize our hope in Christ's saving action to renew us and our hearts.

Take Action!

Stop the Money Pipeline

This coalition was founded in 2020 after over a decade of different national movements relating to fossil fuel divestment, defending of tribal land and water rights, and holding the financial sector accountable for its role in the climate crisis. Join this group in their mission to "force the financial sector to stop doing business with the corporations causing the climate crisis and abusing human rights."

<https://stopthemoneypipeline.com/>

Scenic Hudson

For more than 50 years, Scenic Hudson has been preserving and improving "open spaces, working farms, and historic cities and town centers" in an effort to ensure access to the scenic parts of the Hudson Valley for generations to come. Explore their parks and plan your next adventure with their community partners to experience the diverse natural wonders the Hudson Valley has to offer.

<https://www.scenichudson.org/>





Views from a Highlander

by John Kramer

Note: Its initial name, “the Dive” used the image of Bethany’s Lake Cromwell, but Bethany’s location in the foothills of the Hudson Highlands provides an image drawn from a nationally-recognized area. The reader can expect from this column insights, information and wisdom drawn from John’s decades of hiking and treasuring these mountains.

Care for Creation at Bethany is located in New York’s Hudson River Valley, one of the 40 National Heritage Areas in the U.S. Its mountains – the Hudson Highlands – are noted for their stunning views and strategic importance, environmentally, culturally and militarily. They lie primarily in Orange County on the West Bank of the Hudson River and in Dutchess/Putnam County on the East.

Hiking north along the river, the Highlands are initially noticeable on the East side at Croton-on-Hudson. Near the Peekskill Heights, one can cross the Bear Mountain Bridge to the river’s west bank and enter Bear Mountain State Park with its iconic Bear Mountain. This is the location of the oldest section of the Appalachian Trail. Bethany in Highland Mills is nestled securely in its foothills and on several occasions opened its doors to weary trail hikers.

The West-side Highlands continue north from Bear Mountain into Cornwall-on-Hudson with its nationally renowned Storm King Mountain, a landmark for environmental law which gave the Hudson River Valley Constitutional standing. Vistas along the northbound journey reveal Highland Falls, home of West Point Military Academy.

Veering southeast from the Bear Mountain Bridge, the hiker can visit the immediate neighbor of Highland Mills, Black Rock Mountain. This nature preserve is home to 7 reservoirs which feed New York City. The area is primarily available only by hiking trails, but this columnist can attest that beauties hidden throughout the trails to the reservoirs are well-worth the arduous hike.

The Hudson Highlands give way to the Catskill Mountains just south of Kingston. This city, just off the NY State Thruway, is one hour from Bethany by car and for those who want to enjoy the Hudson Highlands “on wheels”, Care for Creation at Bethany can provide beautiful, relaxing routes for driving throughout the ecological wonders of this national heritage area.



Looking South from the Newburgh Beacon Bridge, Breakneck Ridge is to the left (East Side) and Storm King Mountain to the right (West Side). Beyond Bannerman’s Island, West Point is just visible.





Upcoming Event!

Gathering of Appreciation for Small Businesses

Oct. 21st

Have you heard about how “sustainability” priorities are affecting the way businesses are run today?

Please join us for a discussion of sustainability and how your local business may stand to benefit!

Saturday, October 21, 2023, 11 A.M.

Bethany Spirituality Center

15 Bethany Drive, Highland Mills, NY

Bethany Spirituality Center, Highland Mills, has been part of the local business community for over 100 years and the support, service, and leadership of the businesses have done much to ensure that we are still here!! The Religious of Jesus and Mary and all at Bethany are deeply grateful. Therefore, we are inviting you, our business colleagues, to a Gathering of Appreciation

The seminar will offer new insights as we move into a future that calls on businesses to have an increasingly positive impact on the environment – an approach which benefits both the business itself and the local community. It will be given by the co-authors of the recently published book, Sustainability Accounting and Reporting:

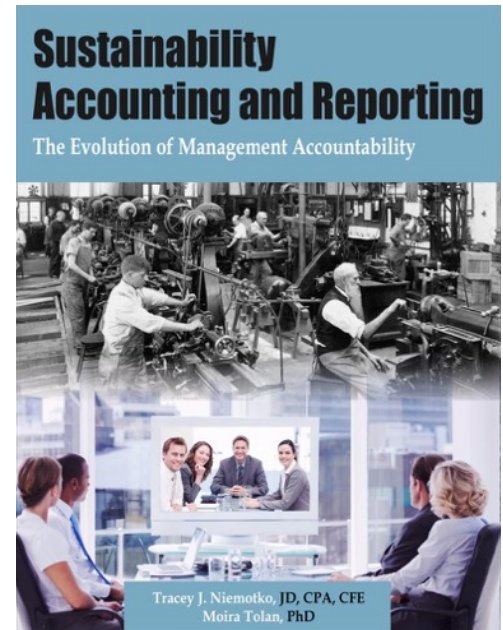
Professor Tracey Niemotko, JD, CPA, CFE

Chair of the Department of Accounting at Marist College & “one of the 100 most influential people in accounting” (Accounting Today);

Professor Moira Tolan, PhD, MBA

Professor of Business at Mount Saint Mary College & a recognized leader in Business Management Education.

If you are a member of a the greater Highland Mills business community and are intersted in attending, please reach out to by October 9, 2023, to **Louise Pisano at 845-541-1492 or louise.pisano@aol.com**.





Scripture Connection: A Study of Genesis 2:8

It is thought that Eden may be the name of a region in southern Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq). The word “Eden” may be derived from a Sumerian word meaning “fertile plain.” However, a similar-sounding Hebrew word, meaning “delight,” could be behind the Greek translation, *“The Lord God planted a paradise in Eden.”* Perhaps the garden was not intended as a paradise for the humans, but instead a pleasure park for God. Man tended it for God. The story is not about “paradise lost.”¹

My thinking roamed around the question: Isn’t the whole planet God’s creation for humans to tend? Has anyone yet found ‘the spot’ on this planet that was the biblical “Eden”.

“Some people believe that the Garden of Eden was located in what history calls the fertile crescent. Scientists often believe that civilization as we know it began here. Other people believe that the Garden of Eden’s location no longer exists because of the changes in continents and land masses over time. Of course, both of these theories take the view that the Garden of Eden was more a metaphor than an actual place.”²

What if the whole planet was “the place?” And humans in this holy “pleasure park,” were in a state of harmony with the Divine One and all creation. Then something serious happened that put everything out of whack. Harmony was disrupted. The whole globe was in a broken relationship.

...until a Divine One came to live among us. This One began the repair of the disharmony and showed us to live with compassion, mercy, and love: how to be responsible for the scarred “pleasure park” and ourselves within it as a whole unit.

What if, now, our responsibility is to tend and keep this garden alive...in response to the Divine One?



1. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+2%3A4-8&version=NABRE>
 2. <https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/garden-eden-401969>



Our Mission

To foster the Integrity of Creation and the care for our common home by using what we have in the property and facilities at Bethany in response to the call of Pope Francis in *Laudato Si* and the priorities of the Religious of Jesus and Mary.



Contact Us

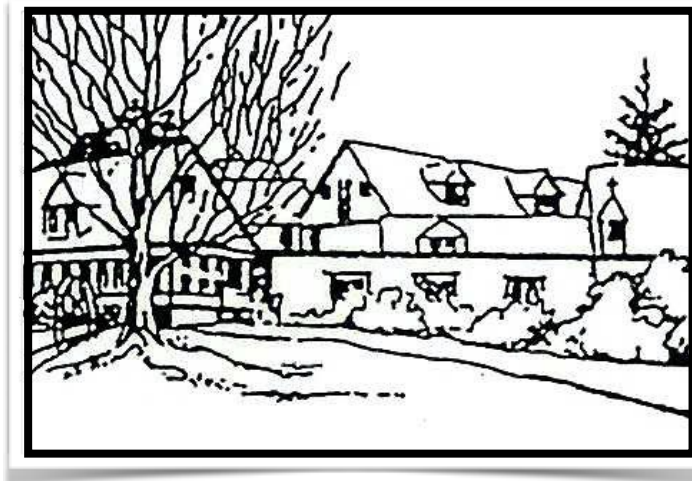
Email: carersofcreation.bethany@gmail.com

Facebook Page: Cfc Bethany

Website: Coming Soon

Address:

Care for Creation Center
15 Bethany Drive Highland Mills, NY 10930



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Photo Credits: Sr. Teresita Morse, Kayel Conklin, RJM Instagram, Getty Images, Katie Williams, Sprout Creek Farm Historical Photos, NYT, and Village of Woodbury

Edited by: Katie Williams



*Care For Creation
at Bethany*

MISSION STATEMENT

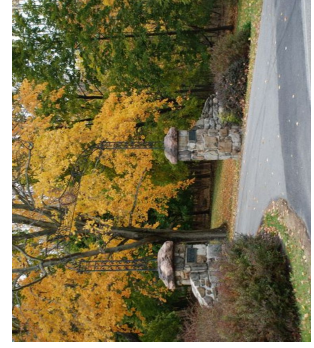
Our Mission is to foster the Integrity of Creation and the care for our common home by using what we have in the property and facilities at Bethany in response to the call of Pope Francis in Laudato Si' and the priorities of the Religious of Jesus and Mary.

**All our programs are Centered in
"the God in Whom we live and
move and have our being."**

(Acts 17:28)

**An Invitation to the Local Church
Communities**

Bethany has been held in Sacred Trust by the Religious of Jesus and Mary for 112 years. Throughout 11 decades, they have seen how deeply the Divine Creator speaks to those who come to this "holy ground". Thus, they are committed to making Bethany a welcoming place where people can listen to their Creator God speaking to them through the natural world, commune with the Lord, and increasingly become, themselves, "Carers of Creation."



Care for Creation at Bethany

15 Bethany Drive
Highland Mills NY 10930

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Care for Creation at Bethany looks forward to serving the needs of your Parish and your Religious Education/ Faith Formation Programs

PARISH: We are happy to offer you comfortable meeting rooms in a beautiful natural environment for such groups as your Parish Council, Parish Staff, various parish committees, RCIA events, AND especially your parish Laudato Si' committee.

Religious Education/Faith Formation Programs:

Whether it be the following "tried and true" events, or new experiences in faith formation, Care for Creation at Bethany will simply provide the space for you to use, or will help you design your event, rooted in the experience of meeting the Lord in the natural world God has created.

Family Days (designed by Care for Creation or Parish leaders)
Outdoor Mass (woods or Lake front)

Retreats:

- Confirmation
- First Penance
- First Communion
- Grade Level
- Days of reflection for Youth, young adults, adults and families



Available facilities

- Several large indoor meeting spaces
- Wi-Fi and Internet available
- TV/DVD/VCR
- Extensive Ecological library (digital & print)
- Small Chapel for personal prayer
- Limited kitchen area with refrigerator, sink, microwave, counters, coffee makers
- For a meal, you are free to make your own arrangements with a caterer or use the kitchen area for food prep.



Give your parishioners, families, and church community the gift of sharing in the beauty of God's creation through the offerings at Bethany.

Woodlands/hiking trails



Lake

Butterfly gardens

Trees



Flowers

Prayer grotto

Contact Us to discuss how we can be of service to you.

Care for Creation at Bethany
 Louise Pisano 845-541-1492
Caresofcreation.Bethany@gmail.com
 Sister Teresita Morse, RJM
 Sister Joan Curtin, CND