



# IAWN

June 2021

## Climate Change and Gender Justice



## International Anglican Women's Network

'Thinking Globally and Acting Locally'

Bringing the Perspectives of Women and Raising Issues Affecting Them

<http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org>

## Editorial

Archdeacon Carole Hughes

This edition of the IAWN newsletter strongly emphasises the need for all genders to be involved in climate justice. As in Bishop Ellinah's writings, it is the challenge of our time. Climate emergency *exacerbates the insecurities of the most vulnerable, which includes women*. When storms and rising water levels occur, social norms often offer preferential treatment to men and boys. The women are the ones who struggle behind the scenes to put food and water on the table and restore the living spaces. As in Rachel Mash's article, there is a strong call to action, which includes increasing the number of women in decision-making positions when working with climate justice and climate emergencies and identifying young women as *climate prophets*!

The hope found in these articles embraces *earth as sacred* and a worldview where *humanity is in relationship with the entire created order*. (Dr. Kapya) Examples of proactive projects that are restoring the earth's balance include the *Affection Baskets* (Margareth Palacios), the *church's garden fair* set up where organic products and handicrafts are sold (Lucimeia Gall Konig), and the Sewing Solidarity project (Neide Castro Ramos).

Climate justice is linked with a need to *restore harmony in creation* (Bishop Zac). Let us hear the voices of those who are passionate and working for climate justice and especially the climate prophets.

As Vanessa Nakate says in her article, let us not be silent at this time.

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Archdeacon Carole Hughes

The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

Chair, IAWN Steering Group

## Linking Gender and the Environment

Rev. Rachel Mash

Climate change is an issue affecting the entire world, but women are disproportionately more likely to struggle with the consequences of the global climate crisis. There are many reasons for this, making it even more vital that we take action on this now.

### Food

Rural women depend on local ecosystems and are more likely to face food insecurity than men. When drought or floods impact food prices, social norms often prioritise men and boys, with women and girls going hungry and eating less nutritious food. When women cannot put the same amount of food on the table due to food prices or bottled water costs, they are at risk of domestic violence. Young urban women, pressured to send money to support their struggling families, may be at higher risk of exploitation.

### Land

Women farm and produce most of the world's food supply, yet they own less than 20 percent of the land, lacking equal rights in over 90 countries because of traditional or religious law, or implicit bias. They face more barriers in accessing markets, capital, training, and technologies. Agricultural productivity for women farmers is lower due to inequalities in access to fertilisers, pesticides, seeds, and capital. Climate change hits rain-fed agriculture much harder than the primarily male-owned commercial farms with access to technology such as drip irrigation.

## International Anglican Women's Network (IAWN)

'Thinking globally and acting locally', the International Anglican Women's Network (IAWN) brings the perspectives of women and raises issues affecting them to the attention of the Anglican Communion's leadership and to the wider world. The Network strengthens friendship and solidarity among Anglican women across the world and seeks the equal participation, safety and wellbeing of women throughout the Communion and in their own homes and communities.

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## **Water and Sanitation**

In 80 percent of water-deprived households, women and girls carry the water. They are forced to walk long distances, exposed to safety risks. This limits their time for other activities, such as paid work or education. Climate change means that rivers dry up, and they have to walk further, which means starting their journey in the dark. Girls often do not attend school when they have their monthly period if they cannot access water. Communal toilets put them at risk of sexual harassment and rape, and unhygienic toilets can put girls and women at risk of infection.

## **Fuel**

Sixty percent of those who die prematurely from indoor air pollution caused by cooking fuels are women. They are often forced to travel long distances for firewood, risking harassment on the way.

## **Forests**

Six hundred million women depend on forests to sustain their livelihoods. Those from land-poor households are impacted by deforestation in their struggle to meet food and fuel needs. The majority of the 207 environmental defenders killed in 2017 were women.

## **Climate Change and Health**

Women often do the agricultural work, and as temperatures rise, they are at risk of heatstroke. At hotter temperatures, areas that were malaria-free are now becoming breeding grounds for mosquitoes – and pregnant and lactating women are uniquely vulnerable to malaria. Sea level rise leads to water salinity which affects rates of preeclampsia.

## **Fishing**

Cultural roles often limit women to selling the fish which men have caught. For instance, in Zambia, women are not allowed to paddle a boat. An HIV study on Lake Victoria showed that when fish stocks dropped, women were at risk of sexual abuse in order to gain access to the catch, and HIV rates rose.

## **Pollution**

Pregnant and breastfeeding women are at greater risk from pollution. Underpaid women are exposed to more toxic chemicals and pesticides, as cheaper products contain more hazardous chemicals. Women are in more contact with polluted water due to washing and cleaning tasks. When the municipalities do not pick up the plastic waste, it will typically be burned by the women, exposing them to toxic chemicals.

## **Natural disasters**

More females die in disasters than men. Of the 230,000 who died in the 2004 tsunami, two-thirds were women. Why? - men were at work – with transport, social media, in solid buildings and could respond faster. Women wear clothes they can't run in; girls are not taught to swim or climb trees as these are “boyish” activities.

Women were also trying to help the children, elderly, and sick in their care. After disasters, women are vulnerable to sexual abuse in camps or refugee shelters.

However, although women are more at risk from climate change and environmental challenges, they also hold the solution.

## **Women are the Solution**

Young women climate activists such as Greta Thunberg and Vanessa Nakate of Uganda are being heard on international stages. Countries with more female politicians are adopting more robust climate policies. Statistically, women will tend to value bio-diversity more, using land and forests for food and medications. A study in Sierra Leone showed that women could identify 31 uses for a particular tree, while men could only identify 8. Men will typically see natural resources in terms of immediate commercial benefits. Women see food, fuel, medication, and clean water for generations to come.

## **Call to Action – What Can We Do?**

It is absolutely vital that we support our sisters at risk across the world.

- Educate young women – studies show that this is a key factor leading to a drop in population size.
- Increase the number of women decision-makers – leading to more land protection and fewer carbon emissions.
- Identify young women climate prophets of our time and amplify their voices.
- Become one of the 3.2 billion solutions to the environmental challenges of our day.
- What can you do to make a change? What can your church do?





## Tackling Climate Change

Jack Palmer-White

*This year is a critical one for the world to take action on climate change and protect the integrity of creation.* The next round of UN climate talks, known as COP26<sup>1</sup> takes place in November. There is already a great deal of interest and preparation for them, both within the Anglican Communion and throughout the wider world. It is no exaggeration to say that the integrity of creation is under threat and at risk of collapse. The earth's life systems are under severe strain from the triple crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has recently published its first synthesis report [\*Making Peace With Nature: A scientific blueprint to tackle the climate, biodiversity and pollution emergencies\*](#), which opens with these stark words from UN General Secretary, António Guterres:

*Humanity is waging war on nature. This is senseless and suicidal. The consequences of our recklessness are already apparent in human suffering, towering economic losses, and the accelerating erosion of life on Earth.*

The climate COP in Glasgow will be the culmination of a year full of key global moments that can help put our world on a better and more sustainable track. These moments include: The launch of the [UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration on June 5th – World Environment Day](#). A [toolkit for faith leaders' participation](#) in the Decade has been produced by UNEP and has some great ideas to help get involved.

In July, countries will review their progress on Sustainable Development Goals related to the environment. See if your country is one of those reviewing its progress here:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>

October sees UN states gather to reach an agreement on a [framework that will aim to reverse the profound impacts of biodiversity loss](#) across the world. The Anglican Communion Office at the UN is looking for opportunities to promote how Anglicans are already supporting these efforts through conservation and reforestation projects.

In November, when world leaders gather in Glasgow, there will be a great deal of public and media attention on their words and their actions. This particular COP is significant because it is the fifth meeting since the historic Paris climate agreement of 2015. As such, it is the first scheduled milestone for all nations to increase their ambition for reducing their greenhouse gas emissions significantly. These are called Nationally Determined Contributions, or NDCs<sup>2</sup>.

It is essential to understand that it is the actions taken by governments and others *before* the event – the commitments they make to increase their NDCs – that will determine the success of COP26. While some countries have already made more ambitious commitments, most are not displaying the ambition needed to achieve true climate justice. **The most significant and urgent advocacy we can engage in across the Communion ahead of the COP is with our own national governments, calling on them to make more substantial commitments to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.**

NDCs (and the associated National Adaptation Plans) are also a significant opportunity for states to demonstrate that they are committed to reducing their emissions in a gender-just manner. The Paris climate agreement calls for states to “respect, promote and consider” gender equality and women's empowerment when taking action to address climate change. **Alongside calling on governments to make ambitious commitments on reducing emissions, we can also strongly encourage them to set out details of how they will do this in a 'gender-responsive' manner.**

Finally, climate policy must be developed through equal participation of women and men. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (the secretariat that supports all of this work) recognises that “women can (and do) play a critical role in response to climate change due to their local knowledge of and leadership.” “If policies or projects are implemented without women's meaningful participation, it can increase existing inequalities and decrease effectiveness.” **Ask your local, regional, and national representatives to champion women's full and equal representation in leadership and decision-making in environmental and climate policy. Find out who will be negotiating on behalf of your country at COP26 – is the delegation gender-balanced? If not, encourage your political leaders to champion a gender-balanced negotiating team.**

1. COP stands for 'Conference of Parties.' The COP is the supreme decision-making body of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). All States that are Parties to the Convention are represented at the COP. They review the Convention's implementation and assess the effects of the measures taken by Parties and the progress made in achieving the ultimate objective of the Convention.
2. Nationally Determined Contributions embody efforts by each country to reduce national greenhouse emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Together, these climate actions determine whether the world achieves the

## Women in Church Leadership

Rhine Toby Koloti

**The Numbers are talking:** *How the lack of women in the episcopacy shapes ministry and calls the church to extend and transform its ministry.*

At the beginning of January 2021, the Anglican Church of Southern Africa's provincial office announced the official list of names for those nominated as episcopal candidates for the then-upcoming Elective Assemblies to be held in the dioceses of Lesotho, Zululand, Kimberly & Kuruman, and Natal. The total numbers of candidates were as follows: **4 Elective Assemblies, 19 Candidates, and one woman.** This was despite the vigorous efforts made at the recent 2020 Provincial Standing Committee session to advocate and improve the representation of women in church leadership structures - in part, to address issues affecting women in the church, such as patriarchy and GBV, more urgently. An extract from the Motion which was passed at the 2020 PSC session reads as follows:

*This PSC calls on the Synod of Bishops and Dioceses to encourage that where there are vacancies of bishoprics, that the Elective Assembly committees prayerfully and intentionally search the length and breadth of the Province to seek out nominated women clergy who fit the profile for consideration for the bishopric.*

This event was a painful reminder of the ways in which "economies of violence" have and continue to sustain the indignity, exclusion, and poverty that women in the church disproportionately experience. On the one hand, policies, motions, resolutions, and laws are proving once more to be inadequate to deliver gender equality in the church. On the other hand, the lack of action by 'good' people continues to enable the increasing culture of oppressing women and gaslighting those who try to advocate for women's leadership in the church. Thus, it's becoming futile to envisage and theoretically advocate for women's leadership in the church while ignoring the patriarchal institutional culture and theological discourses that discriminate against women.

The Anglican Student Federation (ASF) is the only provincial wing of the ACSA. It serves as the Anglican church's presence in over 30 Universities in the ACSA, ministering to university students in Namibia, Lesotho, Mozambique, Angola, eSwatini (formerly known as Swaziland), and South Africa. In light of the gender justice issues mentioned above, the federation's Gender Education and Transformation office has been running monthly online webinars and courageous conversations to address the two leading economies of violence against women in the church, i.e., gender-based violence and exclusion of women from leadership roles in the church. These courageous conversations serve as a platform where young Anglicans can come together and confront the evil and sinful patterns of patriarchy, misogyny, androcentric and heteronormative attitudes and discourses that serve as fertile soil for the insemination and sustenance of male headship and ultimately perpetuate GBV.

In conclusion, I wish to bring attention and encourage our allies and fellow gender justice activists around the globe to remember that if you "Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day, but if you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime." (unknown)

I leave this proverb as unknown because its origin is highly contested in literature; nonetheless, it is often received positively as a general principle for alleviating poverty by facilitating self-sufficiency instead of instant dependency. However, I wish to add a line to this proverb, a line that best reflects the status quo in South Africa post-1994<sup>1</sup>: "Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish; you feed him for a lifetime, **but remember to remove the 'No fishing' signs!**"

Likewise, may we go beyond passing resolutions, policies, motions, etc., when addressing GBV. May we instead repent "of the historic **patriarchy** of our faith which so often colludes with discriminatory attitudes in our culture" (Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane, 2005).

1. I intentionally use the term "post-1994" as opposed to "post-apartheid" as a way of prophetically denouncing the misconception that apartheid South Africa is over. The apartheid system has indeed been abolished politically, but socially and economically, the black majority still suffers disproportionately.

TOBY KOLOTI  
CONVENOR

ANGLICAN STUDENTS' FEDERATION  
IN CONVERSATION WITH  
REV. CANON DR. VICENTIA KGABE

While media attention seems to suggest that gender-based violence (GBV) is predominantly a secular 'scourge' that is somehow committed by immoral monsters and strangers in society, the recent #ChurchToo movement suggests otherwise. For example, several cases of GBV in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa which have come to the fore since 2018 indicates how serious the problem is within the church. As an organization within the church, we have observed that GBV in the church is not only prevalent but on the increase, therefore, we saw it befitting to host a courageous conversation between the Rector of the College of Transfiguration and ANSOC students in and across ACSA, in an effort to better understand the ways in which our church is complicit in the gendered abuse of its congregants and to further establish how we as students can play a role in eradicating this global pandemic.

ASF  
SOUTH AFRICAN FEDERATION

VIA ZOOM ID: 914 6815 7815  
PASSWORD: REQUEST FROM REGIONAL CHAIRPERSONS

Rhine Toby Koloti is the Gender Education and Transformation officer for the Anglican Students Federation in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, Diocese of Saldanha Bay.

## The Sewing Solidarity Project

Neide Castro Ramos



Pandemics and epidemics that affect humanity often have environmental factors to consider. The confinement and production of animals for food consumption have already been responsible for the emergence of previous pandemics. The pressure of urban and agrarian expansion on natural environments and climate change has accelerated the loss of habitats, thus increasing the frequency of contact between humans and wild animals. Some species are potential virus reservoirs hosts that we have not been exposed to yet. The larger the scale of production of confined animals and the greater the pressure on natural environments, the more likely new epidemics will appear.

The Sewing Solidarity project started during the Coronavirus pandemic that hit Brazil in 2020. At the beginning of the pandemic, there was a shortage of surgical masks, which are of great importance in preventing the transmission of the virus. The Ministry of Health advised that, in the absence of industrialized masks, fabric masks should be used, which could be made by hand. With the collaboration and guidance of the City Hall, several volunteer seamstresses and I started producing masks following hygiene and health protocols. Together, we were responsible for the production of around 10,000 masks distributed to the population.

This report aims to provide a small contribution to the women's struggle for recognition in the face of a reality that, even today, devalues women's work. In addition to crocheting, I am dedicated to sewing, and through it, I have had the opportunity to help many people and institutions. It all started in my home in 1975 when I took a sewing course and bought my first Singer sewing machine a year later. Since then, I have never stopped; I have made dozens of gift dresses at a time when I needed a lot more fabric to make the many ruffles. I made wedding dresses, priestly garments for priests, layettes for babies from needy families, cloth dolls, uniforms, and helped make costumes for the theater in different cities.

My legacy is based on my work and skills as a craftswoman and seamstress, and I have strived to teach anyone who wants to learn. This allows the handicrafts skills to remain in the memories of the pieces already made and as a means to live for other women who, like myself and, before me, my mother, made their livelihood and dignity from this labor.

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Neide is 83 years old, born in Butiá/RS, daughter of Olga Dunchat, a German, and Carlos Brum Castro, a black man. She spends most of her time crocheting, sewing, or other crafts. With her husband, Onofre Machado Ramos, now deceased, she has eight children. They are an Anglican family, and she cannot speak about her career as an artisan without mentioning the movements she participates in and the church, where she interacts with other younger or contemporary women, always carrying a message of appreciation for the presence of women in all spaces. Her mother was widowed when she was nine, and she had five daughters. Aware of her unfavorable condition in society as a woman and alone in the provision for the household, her mother taught her daughters to work and ensure their livelihood from an early age. She dedicated herself to crocheting in the little free time she had, skillfully weaving beautiful pieces that she sold to reinforce our budget. Over time, they also learned to crochet, Neide's eyes don't help her anymore, but God still allows her to make quilts, napkins, towels, and even clothes. Unfortunately, she believes that the thousands of meters that she has weaved over more than 60 years of crochet will be the only reminder of this artisanal activity.

## The Organic and Cultural Ascension Expo

Luciméia Gall König

The Organic and Cultural Ascension Expo is developed in the Ascension Parish, Southern Diocese. In the Church's garden, a fair is set up where organic products and handicrafts are sold. The event takes place every Wednesday from 9 am to 1 pm. When municipal legislation allowed, it continued to be held during the pandemic, because it is an open-air activity.

The Fair is part of the Eco-Health Pastoral of the Southern Diocese. In addition to the availability of organic products, many of which are locally grown, it allows a moment of coexistence and exchange of experiences between marketers and customers in an ecological space, what is good for health is offered: organic food, handicrafts, works of art, music, and spirituality.



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Luciméia is a female leader born in São Pedro do Sul, a small town in the central portion of the state of Rio Grande do Sul. Currently, she works in the Parish of Ascension alongside her husband, Rev. Pilato Pereira in Porto Alegre, RS. She is an instructor of Brazilian Sign Language (BSL), the sign language used by deaf communities, and Director of the Special State School Padre Reus, a school in the state network of RS, which is a reference in the deaf and hearing impaired education for 58 years.



## Affection Baskets

Margareth Palacios



The Parish of the Redeemer in the Cidade Baixa neighborhood, close to Porto Alegre's city center is located in a densely populated central area, occupied mainly by buildings without a large open-air patio.

Nonetheless, in the small corridor next to the parish hall, a project is being developed to grow seedlings of medicinal herbs, spices, and teas. Irrigation is carried out with the use of rainwater collected from the church and parish hall's roofs. A compost bin has also been installed

at the site. This allows for the processing and reuse of the generated organic waste, giving rise to the organic compost used in the cultivation of the garden.

This Urban Garden is an ecological arm of the Affection Baskets Project.

The Affection Baskets is a project to collect and donate food, hygiene materials, and books to the underprivileged population of the Metropolitan Region of Porto Alegre, developed in partnership with the Movement of Workers for Rights - MTD. MTD is a movement that aims for political formation and social transformation and fights for a popular project for Brazil.

In this way, the Parish of the Redeemer, which is one of the points of collection of products for donation, began to add the seedlings of medicinal herbs, spices, and teas produced locally and sustainably in the baskets to be donated, adding environmental education and sustainability to the social project.

In the link <https://www.facebook.com/rev.pauloduarte/videos/3378175518904489/> there is a video available where Rev. Paulo and Professor Margareth demonstrate the development of the urban garden and the rainwater harvesting system.

Margareth Palacios has been a teacher in the state school system for 30 years, currently acting as a Pedagogical Coordinator at Prudente de Moraes School in the municipality of Osório, RS.

## Food Security: Common Management for Reduction of Domestic Conflict

Guy Nasasagare

Harvest in Burundi has always been associated with joy. Sometimes it becomes a source of conflict in households due to mismanagement or misuse. In Makamba, as in some other parts of the country, farmers testify that a good harvest is one of the indicators of well-being because it's the main source of income for many people. They also confirm that it's not easy for some people to make the harvest more profitable because some misuse it and instead of enjoying the outcome of their efforts, conflicts break out.

Eric, a farmer living in the southern part of Burundi in Makamba, has been practicing traditional farming for many years that has always resulted in low production and little impact on his family.

Three years ago the Anglican Church of Burundi in collaboration with Episcopal Relief and Development initiated a new approach to development through an Integrated Programme that covers some basic elements like climate resilience, food security, promoting community health, and the fight against gender-based violence.

Eric has participated in the programme and has learnt some skills that he has been practicing and according to his



experience has brought an obvious change. For instance, the modern farming techniques have enabled farmers like him to increase the production they get each season from the same field. He stressed that the increase of harvest has allowed families to improve their conditions of life but has sometimes also resulted in domestic conflict because crops they harvested have not been used for development purposes. Eric says that this kind of conflict is due to the lack of common storage and management of the harvest. "It's easy for a husband to sell a quantity of harvest when he needs a drink. The women eventually oppose him for using the resources for non-profit reasons and conflict arises," he says.

Through the Integrated Programme, farmers of Nyankara in Makamba decided to address those issues by initiating a common hangar for locally produced harvest. The Cooperative that is investing in agriculture will store its crops under common structured management. According to the cooperative members this common management will reduce domestic conflicts as it will set a price for the products and farmers will make profits as the association negotiates the best price and will be in charge of finding a good market for produce.

**SOLIDARIEDADE**

Pela Vida. Contra a Carestia.

Apoie o Movimento de Trabalhadoras e Trabalhadores por Direitos:  
Ajude Famílias durante a CRISE do Covid. DOE!

Para Doações em Dinheiro	Para Doações de Alimentos
Titular da Conta: Associação Estadual Carlos Dorneles CNPJ: 04.674.671/0001-99	Paróquia do Redentor - IEAB - Diocese Meridional Rua José do Patrocínio, 570 - Cidade Baixa, Porto Alegre - RS
Banco: Banrisul (041)	Quartas das 16h às 19h
Agência: 0839	Sábado das 10h às 16h
Conta Corrente: 06.160133.0-4	

Mais informações em  
Facebook.com/MTDRioGrandedoSul

## Climate Change and the Role We Can Play

Gabrielle Boyd

**Psalms 104: 25** *"There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number—living things both large and small."*

Climate change and the part we play in this deteriorating global situation is a most important issue. I am delighted to see the International Anglican Women's Network making this a focus for the month.

How we consciously and unconsciously add to the warming of the planet can be very overwhelming. One of the best approaches is to do what your network is doing and tackle it as a group. It can be a lonely and futile seeming path trying to limit your carbon footprint and feel like you are just one very small and insignificant effort, but as a group, you know that your combined efforts will and do make a difference. There are also many fantastic and practical bible studies available if you want to combine your faith and fellowship with tackling Climate Change. Your own country will have studies applicable to your region and culture. You can share ideas and approaches that put more tools in your environmental care toolbox. Ideally, if you are having a climate change focus month, it should not just be something you attend to for around four weeks (not like your No Chocolate Lent goal), but rather you will spend this month learning lifestyle changes that will become permanent. Climate Change will not be a one-month event, so neither should your response to it.

Climate Change is a large and complicated beast. Within its causes and effects come the names of other environmental concerns that you will undoubtedly be familiar with – such as plastic pollution, water, air pollution, toxic agricultural methods, and mass extinctions. These are all grim concepts but tackle any of these issues, and you will also be tackling the looming shadow of Climate Change. Big Oil is a major Climate Change contributor, and, as all plastic is made from oil products, it is the demon behind plastic pollution.

So, when facing down Climate Change and what you might be able to do about it, Plastic Pollution is a great place to start. Not only because you very quickly see a tangible change in the amount of plastic waste you are producing, but it only requires you to make a change in shopping habits. In contrast, some other Climate Change focusing will have you altering your diet or means of transport. These are all great things to do, but reducing plastic is one of the easier introductions to making an environmental difference. Then onwards and upwards to more sustainable food choices and electric cars in time. By reducing your dependency on plastic, you stop empowering the producers of plastic packaging, who quote public demand and expectation as a reason to continue production. There are 20 companies in the world that make the majority of single-use plastic items. Stop using their products, and you will be helping the planet to clean itself up.

I come from a household that moves internationally as work dictates, and my current parish is the Anglican Cathedral in Montreal, Quebec. The congregation is very environmentally motivated, and they have been very receptive to a number of community presentations I have given on how to limit your dependency on plastic. When educating people on this issue, I am often struck by how few people truly understand how much environmental impact plastic and plastic production has. Most people, and this seems a global perspective, think of it as an aesthetic problem, 'the beach looks messy,' but appearance is the least of our earth's plastic problems. People may not know why and how plastic kills marine life. They may not know that plastic is a permanent waste, never breaking down into a harmless substance. They may not realise many marine animals and humans have plastic in their systems or that the production of plastic exacerbates the Green House gasses in the atmosphere. Not everybody is aware how the death of the oceans, and sadly they are dying, is linked to the cooling and warming of the planet, the melting of the poles, and therefore, the flooding of the land—bringing us back to our topic of Climate Change.

Sadly, if you recycle all your plastic dutifully, thinking this a sound environmental approach, this is an illusion that must end. Very, very little plastic is successfully recycled, only 1%. The nice little recycling arrow and

number that you look for on packaging is completely misleading. So many of us believe an image of arrows in constant circulation symbolically represents recycling – it seems like it should. In reality, this symbol indicates material composition and not recyclability. How many people believe that symbol is synonymous with recycling? It is just another ruse used to keep the public thinking that there is an environmentally sound destination for their plastic waste. Recycling cannot not be your response to plastic pollution.

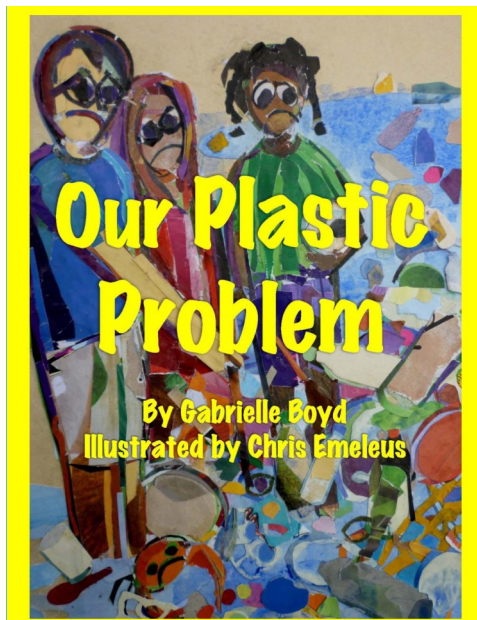




If you would like some guidance to make reducing plastic your focus this month, here is a resource book (in children's format but just as educational for adults) on Plastic Pollution. Looking through the artwork, which are collages made from recycled materials and created by Anglican Artist Chris Emeleus, you will see recognizable plastic objects which help readers and listeners to recognise their part in this destructive environmental problem.

This book is a basic introduction - but a good place to start. Read it as a family, as different family members have different plastic footprints. Take on a few plastic reducing ideas (I am sure many of you already do many of the suggestions) and go out shopping with a better understanding of the problem and ways to manage it. Actively consider the peanut butter in the glass jar verse plastic jar, go beeswax wrap, not plastic food wrap, and head for the farmers market for unpackaged fruit and veggies. Try an organic apple instead of a plastic-wrapped lollypop for the kids, oh - and no more bottles of plastic water. The earth will really appreciate your efforts.

So, the best of luck with your Climate Change focus and remember you don't have to stand on a soapbox and rant and rave with passion about environmental crimes to make a difference. You can bring about just as much change leading by example and encouraging others - so Psalms 104: 25 remains an accurate description of our seas!



## Prophetic Indigenous Voices on the Planetary Crisis

In this video, we hear from prophetic indigenous voices from Africa who are part of the Anglican Communion. One voice is that of Bishop Ellinah Wamukoya (Diocese of Swaziland).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nn8mG2uvzRk> (Minute 6:06 – 17:28)



**Bishop Ellinah Ntfombi Wamukoya** became the first woman bishop in the Anglican Church in Africa in 2012.

She was previously the Town Clerk of Manzini, eSwatini's commercial hub, having earlier served as the City Planner. She held a Master's degree in Town and Regional Planning. She had a history of serving in community offices and organizations, and had a long involvement with the Anglican Diocese of Swaziland. She was ordained priest in 2005. At the time she was elected bishop, she was Anglican chaplain to the University of eSwatini. In her Diocese, the Province of Southern Africa and the Anglican Communion, Bishop Ellinah was widely known for her advocacy of the integrity of creation. She was the liaison bishop for

the environment in the Province of Southern Africa. In 2016, she was named by the BBC in London as one of the world's 100 most inspirational and influential women. She passed away in January 2021 from Covid-19.

### Below is the transcript of her talk:

Climate change is a reality for the indigenous people in Africa. It is a prominent environmental and developmental issue. It is the challenge of our time. It exacerbates insecurities of the most vulnerable populations which includes women. One of the greatest challenges is water security. 46 percent of the rural population does not have access to safe drinking water. It is common for people especially women to walk long distances to fetch drinking water and in some instances they share water resources with livestock. From a personal experience we used to come from school around 4 pm, grab something small to eat and sometimes you'd be eating as you go along to fetch the water, trek for 3 km with a 20 litre container. It was not like you would collect the water and come back, you still had to get there and queue because we buried a 20-liter tin in the ground and the water would seep through. So you would have to queue and wait for your turn to come. By the time you came back from the river, it would be well after 6 pm. I remember one time my grandmother had to come look for me because she was now worried what was wrong. And at times you would go all the way and then you would slip and the water would fall and you can imagine the pain that goes with that. From the story just told apart from health risks, women lose a lot of time walking to water sources instead of participating in gainful economic activities. And of course by the time you would come back well after six. By that time, you come to cook and for girls like myself you would find there would be very little time to study because by the time you finished cooking and eating supper and washing dishes you are already tired. In the dry seasons the rivers are already dry and they have to dig in the sand to get to the water.

Food security across SADC countries is an issue due to persistent drought, back to back cyclones and flooding. Rain fed crops suffer most. I remember also one time with my mother we had to trek for 20 kilometres to go and look for maize to go back and mill. We found the maize and coming back we had to carry a bag of 20 kg. So I would wake up in the morning to grind at the millers to at least have breakfast in the morning before going to school. Imagine for me and my mother that was a 30 to 40 km walk all round. Imagine waking up in the morning still tired, to go to the millers which is something like 2 km to make sure there is food at home to eat. Again is it often the girls who have to drop out of school to work to feed their families. The African development bank reports that women are heavily reliant on environmental related livelihoods.

But the frequent droughts have had devastating impact on them. While their men are out looking for jobs women and girls during times of drought are usually the last to eat. First to skip meals sometimes they can skip meals one to two days so that the children can eat. This is a reality I have lived through myself. One time we came back from school and my mother said -I am tired. We thought she was joking and she wasn't and for the first time in my life I slept without any food in my stomach. The following day she woke up and went and looked for maize and brought it home and we were able to take it to the millers and then have a meal. Climate change has seen a lot of river flow reduced some up to 40 percent.

To quote Grandmother Josephine Mandamin "Water is life and women are life givers" So it is a traditionally recognised responsibility for women to take care of that which is necessary for life. Women carry water indicating that women are caretakers of water and carry life within themselves. Imagine all of us we came from our mothers' wombs and we were in water for the 9-month duration that we were in our mothers' wombs. The water of mother Earth carries life to us. As women we carry life through our bodies. Therefore, we as women are life givers and protectors of water and that is why it is important to us that Mother Earth is given the respect that she deserves.

Colonialism processes, patriarchal and traditional, Western education and capitalist economies resulted in men being literate and finding white collar jobs faster than women, forcing the women to remain in the rural areas providing households with water and fuel, wood for heating and cooking. As the ones affected by the water crisis the women are raising their voices to mechanisms applied to support and empower indigenous women in their role as water stewards and to be part of or lead the water governance dialogue to overcome these challenges.

A woman in Kenya refers herself to a farmer, sacred site and seed custodian and memory retriever in her community in Tharaka county in central Kenya. She has been working to recover the memory of indigenous seeds and has been working to find elderly women in interior villages to recover varieties of sorghum, millet and cowpea. These crops are indigenous to Africa but their consumption has declined. Need for cash to pay taxes and school fees forces the adoption of foreign crops such as maize and others. Christian beliefs resulted in the reduction of production of crops such as millet because they were used in indigenous rituals. Globalisation and urbanisation has caused a shift from indigenous food. Government has encouraged the production of rice, wheat maize which are prone to global price volatility. Forces of the climate crisis are leaving indigenous women poorer. These combined factors have weakened the resilience of indigenous people to respond to Climate Change, creating an ecological and cultural crisis. Residents near river Katita, in Tharaka have experienced consecutive years of little rain, difficulties of accessing water. Forced to grow hybrid seeds using fertilisers, these have left them poorer, for when you do not use the fertilizer the yield will not be as good as when you use the fertilizers. Whenever the indigenous women met they brought indigenous seeds resistant to weather conditions to share. Seeds are the exclusive province of women in Tharaka. Women select seeds before harvesting, classify them accorded to desired characteristics and provide seeds for rituals. Restoring women's knowledge and practices will mean less dependence on hybrid seeds that cannot be used in indigenous ceremonies. Seed which require one to purchase seeds each season are not resistant to Climate change. This climate crisis that is preying on peoples' poverty and worsening levels of inequality and resulting in rising malnutrition rates should be dealt with to free the women and children who are always hit first. Says Nyagwa. I thank you.





## What Action Can We Take On Climate And Gender Justice?

Mandy Marshall – Director for Gender Justice, Anglican Communion Office

Climate change and gender justice can seem huge issues that appear so difficult to overcome it's hard to know where to start and what action to take. And yet it takes each of us, making small changes, using our skills, experience, and knowledge to raise our voices, speak out, to not give up, to model the change, for it to make a real difference. You never know who is watching you and the changes you are making that could encourage others in your church, your community, and even those in power to make changes too.

Here are some ideas:

1. Model the change yourself – grow your own vegetables, use organic fertilisers, reduce the amount of food waste, share food with others, compost any food waste.
2. Implement the 5R's around the environment – reduce, reuse, recycle, restore and reclaim.
3. If you own a car, use it less and use public transport or cycle more.
4. Find out who your government representatives are and lobby them for change ahead of the UN Environment Assembly in February 2022
5. Join Co-operatives and food share programmes, plant a shamba, or an allotment.
6. Share what we have with others, so they do not have to buy new things.
7. Educate girls and keep them in school. Girls' education is directly linked to increased sustainability in many areas of life.
8. Consider the size of the family you want and the impact on the environment.
9. Stand for election at the local level and be involved in the decision-making in your community. Consider standing for public office to make bigger changes.
10. Don't give up! Every change makes a difference.

Modelling the change and being the change and enabling others to see the difference it can make is one of the best things we can do. It encourages others to start making small changes in their own lives. Thank you for doing your bit to halt and reverse climate change and gender injustice.

### Further Reading and Resources:

Anglican Alliance Climate page [Climate - Anglican Alliance](#)

Anglican Communion Environmental Network (ACEN) <https://acen.anglicancommunion.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/GreenAnglicans>

IAFN Newsletter on Families and the Climate Emergency [IAFN-newsletter-March-2020-Climate-FINAL.pdf \(anglicancommunion.org\)](#)

Tearfund's Footsteps 59 on Pollution and practical ways to reduce, reuse and recycle [fs59.pdf \(tearfund.org\)](#)

The Burning Question – an in-depth look at companies plastic usage [2020-tearfund-the-burning-question-en.pdf](#)

UNEA [Fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly | Environment Assembly \(unep.org\)](#)

