

(St. Thomas More Social Justice Commission)



Mission: To promote Care of Creation in all of its components, guided by Pope Francis in his encyclical, *Laudato Si*. We encourage our community to act in good faith through ecological awareness and sustainable practices, personally, and as a parish community that is a model for the larger church.



**Laudato Si’ Parish Plan: To Care for Our Common Home**

“We are called to care for [the Earth] and all who live in it. It is our common home – created for all to share and enjoy.”

Pope Francis  
Laudato Si’ (2015)



Join our guides, Pilgrims of Hope, in exploring the aspects of our Parish Plan!

<p><b>Learn from the Earth</b></p>  <p><b>Luce</b> (encouraging light)</p>	<p><i>Jesus invited others to be attentive to the beauty in the world. He was in constant touch with nature. God unites us to all his creatures, but technology can isolate us from the world around us. We must remember that the entire world is a “contact zone!”</i> – Pope Francis, <i>Laudate Deum</i>, #s 64 &amp; 66</p> <p>Our planet’s air, water, soil, animals and people are suffering. They cry out for better care. We know we can turn our hearts to listen and learn from nature. We can give back, not just take from the Earth.</p>
 <p><b>Fe</b> (the faithful one)</p>	<p><i>Human beings are part of nature. Human life, intelligence and freedom are elements of the nature that enriches our planet. We are part of how things work and how they balance.</i> – Pope Francis, <i>Laudate Deum</i>, # 26</p> <p>Every human being needs a safe place to live, with clean air, water and soil. God wants all people to live and learn and work together as one family. Our call is to work for the common good of all.</p>
<p><b>Live Simply</b></p>	<p><i>It’s better to have enough of what we really need, than to have too many things we don’t.</i> – St. Thomas More</p>



**Xin** (the explorer)

What is really important is the joy of living and of being sisters and brothers. What we have and what we own is not that important. We can be happy with enough, with the joys of family and friends.

## Help Heal the Planet



**Sky** (the musician)

*Many of our parishes have already undertaken efforts to increase their care for creation. It is hoped that others will join them, as the need is great and urgent.*  
- Diocese of Davenport Laudato Si Action Plan

We need one another. We are responsible for others and for the world. We can make daily gestures to break cycles of violence and selfishness. We can tell life-giving stories of creation and regeneration. We can weave them into a *civilization of love, and a culture of care.* (Laudato Si #231)

### WHAT WE ALREADY DO

- *Reduce waste by using real dishes in our church kitchen.*
- *Donate leftover food when we can.*
- *Recycle cardboard, paper, and plastic.*
- *Compost some of our food waste and coffee grounds.*
  
- *We are an inclusive parish.*
- *Partner with many local groups to serve the poor.*
- *Lenten Works of Mercy.*
- *Sell fair trade products that help workers and makers around the world.*
  
- *Lenten plain soup suppers.*
- *Taste of St. Thomas More dinners with food from around the world.*
- *Simple liturgies and worship space.*
- *Bulletin articles on Care for Our Common Home.*
  
- *Ending the use of Styrofoam and non-recyclable single-use kitchen items.*
- *Working alongside other local action groups.*
- *Praying and learning in many ways during the Season of Creation.*
- *Enjoying our beautiful woods and meditation path.*
- *Caring for our watershed by responsible management of our parking lot and other runoffs.*
- *Our church will continue to be very energy efficient.*

### MORE WE CAN DO

#### Learn from the Earth:

- Earth-learning resources for religious education, adult reflection and parish groups.
- Study the biodiversity of parish property and area.

#### Hear the Poor:

- Learn from local justice efforts like the Johnson County Poor Farm and Great Plains Action Society.
- Involve more people in immigrant, housing, and anti-violence issues.

- Encourage more outdoor worship, fellowship, and silent spaces.
- Find creation-care library resources. Have an April blessing of seeds.

- Organize transportation to church for those without cars.
- Support non-English speakers.

### Live Simply:

- Plant a church vegetable garden or participate in community gardens.
- Highlight the Lenten Rice Bowl calendar and recipes (crsricebowl.org).
- Practice parish composting. Plan meatless parish meals.
- Set up a table to share home grown fruits and veggies.

### Help Heal the Planet:

- Convert to solar energy.
- Easy-to-use recycle bins.
- Water bottle fillers on all levels.
- Eco-friendly cleaning supplies.
- Plant natural grasses and wildflowers.
- Reduce the use of paper.
- Educate parishioners on how to contact legislators about USCCB & Iowa Catholic Conference alerts.
- Encourage people to sign up for the diocesan Two Feet Newsletter

Link to survey:

(draft of survey content below per Jay Gilchrist)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

I'm a member of St Thomas More \_\_\_ or another faith community (please identify) \_\_\_\_\_

I'm completing this form for \_\_\_ myself, \_\_\_ my family \_\_\_ the parish commission or organization of \_\_\_\_\_

My/our commitment to help with the Parish Laudato Si' Plan is to \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to see our parish grow in care for our common home by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ I'd like the parish Green Team to contact me. My email is \_\_\_\_\_

I realize this is more open-ended and does not mention the four plan goals. That could be done, either at the beginning or end of the survey, or within, with something like:

I/we choose to adopt the following one or more goal(s) of the Parish Laudato Si' Plan:

\_\_\_ Learn from the Earth \_\_\_ Hear the Poor \_\_\_ Live Simply \_\_\_ Help to Heal the Planet