



Green Notes

Green Note, June 27 2025: Dandelions are canaries in the mine.

I took this picture some weeks ago when spring was still in its early stages.

Dandelions are canaries in the mine.

The photo shows new dandelions poking up among violets. Normally we tend to think of dandelions as unwanted weeds, but they also remind me that an old friend who researched the dangerous effects of chemical herbicides on human health used to say, “When you see dandelions, you know the ground is safe to walk on.” In other words, there are worse things than seeing “weeds.” Dandelions have additional good qualities, too, beyond their canary-in-the-mine function. Bees love them, for instance, since they are a valuable source of pollen and nectar. One takeaway message here is that nature is complicated, and sometimes we need to look hard at our



taken-for-granted assumptions about what is

Here are some updates about parish and diocesan efforts to protect our natural world.

1. Success at the (DNW) Synod

Many thanks to Meg Stevens for presenting at the diocesan synod GPAG’s motion asking the diocese continue a staff position in support of the climate emergency response (see below for the full wording*). We are delighted that the motion was carried, and the proposal will now go to Diocesan Council for implementation (subject, as always, to funds availability). In the meantime, Bruce Pond and Mike Starr continue as members of the diocesan Climate Emergency Working Team as it meets to plan and to set priorities for its work.

2. Greening the Parish.

Having increased insulation in the [Hall](https://www.vancouver.anglican.ca/news/st-hilda-s-invests-in-insulation) <https://www.vancouver.anglican.ca/news/st-hilda-s-invests-in-insulation> and replaced old fluorescent lights with LED alternatives, we are continuing our efforts to reduce our carbon footprint, save money, and provide a comfortable heating and cooling environment, by working on a proposal for heat-pumps, solar panels, and battery bank, which will include cost estimates and investigation of grants, subsidies and financing options. Please watch this space for updates as the proposal moves along.

3. Continuing the Conversation

We often ask ourselves what we as individuals can do in the face of seemingly intractable climate warming problems. Climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe tells us that one of the most important—and difficult—things we can do is to talk to others about the climate emergency. During the summer, GPAG is experimenting with a new format for coffee time conversation that we are calling the Green Table. One or more GPAG members sits at the table (identified by its green table cloth) to talk about whatever climate concerns the group at the table wants to raise. Possible topics might include specific climate emergency response actions, climate anxiety, or how to talk with others about climate change and action. Please consider joining us for at least one Sunday during the summer.

4. Divestment

Our diocese is divesting from fossil fuels (this is something GPAG has been advocating for some time). About a month ago, the Diocese of New Westminster issued the welcome news that it is divesting from companies that make money from the production of fossil fuels. Instead it is investing in companies that produce sustainable, fossil-free alternatives. You can read more details here, including the names of the funds being divested and invested: <https://www.vancouver.anglican.ca/news/dioceses-moves-to-fossil-fuel-free-investments> .

Cycling Without Age Vancouver

Cycling Without Age is an organization that takes seniors living in long-term care homes out for rides in trishaws. The trishaws are equipped with pedal assist, which means that like e-bikes, they give the volunteer cyclists a boost. They also provide a smooth ride, and enable the volunteers to ferry passengers without regard for their weight. The volunteers can even carry on a conversation with the passengers, since the energy required of them to pedal is less intense. The Vancouver organization operates six trishaws, providing rides 7 days a week. They take passengers on the bike lanes, streets and into parks across the City of Vancouver, from False Creek, the Arbutus Greenway, Point Grey and Jericho Beach, to the West End, Stanley Park, Riley Park-Little Mountain, and Pacific Spirit Park. <https://cyclingwithoutage.ca/vancouver/>.

California poppies growing by the beach.

I took this picture the other day because I really love California poppies—they seem so brave and cheerful. I worried a bit that they might be considered invasive in BC, but no, apparently not! According to the UBC Botanical Garden, "California poppy is native from northwestern Mexico north to Washington state. It could be considered *almost* native to coastal southwestern British Columbia, and it certainly thrives in warm and dry habitats here, but re-seeding populations are usually short-lived around Vancouver, probably on account of our cold and wet winter weather" (<https://botanicalgarden.ubc.ca/10788-2/>) As our coastal climate dries and warms, though, maybe the native status of California poppies will change.



Cold and wet (or at least dampish) seems to be an apt description of our summer so far, but personally I've been thrilled not to have to water the garden so far. I hope you are enjoying the longer days, and may we continue to avoid the kind of heat we experienced in 2021 and that the east of North America is suffering from right now.

Thank you for all that you do for our natural world,
Christine

* The resolution as passed by Diocese of New Westminster Synod 2025

Resolution 8: Climate Emergency Resolution

MOVED that Synod approve and direct the Diocese to hire, subject to available funds, a staff term person for a minimum of two years as Diocesan Creation Care Coordinator to assist parishes to:

- a. Build capacity within the diocese in making the work of climate emergency response a priority and actionable;
- b. Establish a network of leaders, innovators, and practitioners in climate emergency response within the Diocese;
- c. Establish partnerships with organizations that are values-aligned around climate emergency response;
- d. Develop a Strategic Action Plan in accordance with the Recommendations of the Climate Emergency Working Group (CEWG), previously adopted by Synod, throughout the diocese;
- e. Promote, support and report on parishes working on climate emergency response, including the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.