Care for Creation Accomplishments

The Care for Creation Ministry was formed in April 2013 from a JustFaith adult formation class that focuses on social justice issues. When challenged with what we would do going forward as a team, the 6 participants chose to focus on caring for creation by supporting the sustainability efforts of the Casa, and educating the community on ways to be better stewards of God’s creation. They met with Facilities Staff to establish priorities for action, and then conducted an informal energy audit of the lodging and meeting rooms on campus to determine next steps.

2019

- With Staff and the Sustainability Department, kicked off the Here Comes the Sun Solar Initiative on January 12 & 13 in Hospitality, with the goal of funding 100 solar panels on the roof of the new Community Life Center. Staffed the table, along with the solar company representative, answered questions, provided educational materials, and accepted donations.
- On January 26, hosted the Awakening the Dreamer workshop which was created by the Pachamama Alliance to explore the challenges facing humanity and works toward an environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling, socially just presence on this planet. Welcomed representatives from several local environmental groups to allow participants to learn about ways to continue the momentum. Thirty participants attended the daylong session.
- Participated in the Solar Initiative Education Session on February 11. The C4C Chair joined other presenters to discuss the initiative, the Franciscan ethic to Care for Creation, and ecological actions undertaken already at the Casa. C4C members assisted Staff and Sustainability in answering questions and accepting donations after the program.
- Several members attended Environmental Day at the Legislature on February 13, focusing on environmental protection issues before the legislature.
- A C4C member attended AZIPL’s training session in February to become a Chispa Promoter. She will keep C4C informed of activities we can promote, such as their ongoing efforts with Clean Buses for Ninos.
Hosted a Hospitality Table on February 23 & 24 to continue education of the community on the goal of putting 100 solar panels on the new CLC building to make it a net-zero energy building, plus picking up part of the electricity needs of the church building.

Members of the ministry attended and testified at the ACC Hearing on February 25 in the Renewable Energy Standards Docket.

Collaborated with Staff to post Living a Laudato Si Lent 2019 Calendar (from the Office of Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity, Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth) on Facebook and Twitter starting on Ash Wednesday March 6.

Continued support of the Here Comes the Sun Solar Initiative by hosting another Hospitality Table on March 16 & 17 to accept donations toward the solar panel goal.

Screened the documentary Paris to Pittsburgh at our Creation Connection Movie Night on April 5. It captures the social and economic impacts on states, cities and businesses and inspiring ways Americans are responding. Seventy people attended and joined in a lively discussion after the movie on ways to implement clean energy use in our own communities.

Celebrated the Casa’s Monarch Butterfly Waystation certification on April 6 & 7 in conjunction with the Great Milkweed Grow Out program at the Desert Botanical Gardens (DBG). Hosted Hospitality Tables with C4C members and experts from DBG to answer questions about Monarch butterflies, their habitat, and milkweed. Sold 250 milkweed plants to the community, in effect expanding the boundaries of our Waystation. Sold 96 Monarch Butterfly hats (plus orders for over 20 more) from our Books & Blessings gift shop, with a portion of the proceeds going to future ecological projects on the campus. Arranged for DBG to engage with Catechesis families to plant 50 new milkweed and nectar plants donated to us by DBG, and to engage in other butterfly related activities. Hosted a Dedication Ceremony of the new Waystation and Blessing of the milkweed at the Altar Ramada with refreshments and tours of the new plantings following the ceremony.

On April 27 & 28, celebrated Earth Day with Hospitality Tables displaying “naughty” single use plastic items and “nice” sustainable alternatives to help community members break old habits and find replacements. Introduced a new poster encouraging us reduce consumption, to walk humbly on the
Earth, and to consider what our choices mean to future generations. Sixty-seven community members signed a petition from AZ PIRG asking the Governor to ban styrofoam in Arizona. Our stainless-steel water bottles and reusable canvas bags, both with the Casa logo, were sold to raise funds for more ecological projects.

2018

- Hosted a Hospitality Table in January to raise awareness of plastic pollution all over the world. Created posters to highlight the damage done to our oceans by our disposable lifestyle. Distributed information cards about the harm to our planet from plastic straws. Encouraged eliminating straws or replacing with reusable or compostable alternatives.
- Assisted AZIPL and the Humane Society at their dinner, All God’s Critters, at the Casa on January 18 to celebrate Arizona’s unique wildlife and wild spaces.
- All the members of the C4C Ministry attended The Laudato Si, the Bee, and Me Retreat and workshops by Martin Marklin on the last weekend of January, and learned that the wonderful ecosystem of the bee can teach us how to love and care for all in our world.
- Several C4C members attended AZIPL’s workshop A Climate (for) Change to learn steps we can take now to reduce our carbon impact on the planet.
- Participated with a group from C4C on February 7 at Environmental Day at the Legislature to meet with our legislators to encourage support for pending bills affecting the environment in Arizona, including Public Lands and Ecological Water, among others.
- Arranged for copies of Global Catholic Climate Movement Lenten Fast Calendars to be included in the Bulletin the weekend of February 17 & 18. Also provided an online link to the Calendar in the Bulletin.
Hosted February 24 & 25 Hospitality Table to continue education of the community on plastic pollution from single-use plastic, with a clothesline displaying numerous plastic items to avoid. Distributed bookmarks with important plastic facts, and the C4C Prayer on the reverse. Created a poster with *9 Tips for Living With Less Plastic*. Showed trailer for upcoming Movie Night featuring *A Plastic Ocean*.

- Hosted Sierra Club showing of documentary *Before the Flood* on March 21. Sixty people attended the movie and discussion following.
- Two members of C4C attended AZIPL’s *Be the Spark* workshop March 23 & 24, a leader development/movement building workshop specifically tailored to grow the interfaith climate movement in Arizona.

- Staffed a Ministry Table at the annual Coffee House event on April 7. Displayed clothesline strung with empty plastic water bottles to again demonstrate the harm single-use plastic has on our environment.
- Screened *A Plastic Ocean* at Creation Connection Movie Night on April 13 for 82 attendees, which documented the global effects of plastic pollution and introduced workable technology and policy solutions. Also provided an opportunity for people to sign a State Renewable Energy Standards petition to the ACC.

- Celebrated Earth Day with a Hospitality Table on April 21 & 22. To help reduce plastic bottle use on campus, we sold reusable stainless-steel water bottles with the Casa logo as a fundraiser for a bottling refilling station in our new Community Life Center. Also hosted Citizens Climate Lobby representatives who provided constituent letters for our community members to sign expressing their environmental concerns to Congress.

- Participated with other Faith in Action Ministries at the Paradise Valley Open House at the Casa on April 25. Provided information on the C4C Mission, and had our Casa water bottles for sale to help fund our bottle refilling station.

- C4C members represented the ministry at the Faith in Action Speed Matching event for recent Act, Love, Walk and RCIA participants on May 4.

- Staffed additional Hospitality Tables during the Summer to continue sales of our reusable water bottles and education on plastic pollution.

- Members of C4C toured the new SRP Solar Farm in Casa Grande with Sierra Club and Environment Arizona representatives on October 23.
C4C members attended ASU’s screening of film *Current Revolution: Transforming America’s Electric Grid* on November 5.

Hosted Creation Connection Movie Night on November 9 with *Happening: A Clean Energy Revolution*, which highlights the current state of clean energy generation and what lies ahead. Forty-two people attended. A representative from AZ PIRG was also present with constituent letters to the ACC regarding their ongoing Energy Efficiency Docket. Several participants sent letters and/or took a picture with a sign urging increased energy efficiency funding.

 Participated in the Faith in Action Fair Trade Christmas Sale on December 2 in Hospitality, selling our reusable water bottles.

Designed recycling signs for all lodging rooms to encourage guests to join with the Casa in our recycling efforts on campus. Items to be recycled, along with directions to the nearest recycling bin, were included. Teams of C4C members customized the frames, inserted the signs, then hung the finished products in each of the 78 rooms. This completed the original goal of posting recycling signs in all meeting and lodging rooms on campus.

**2017**

Hosted a table in Hospitality on January 7&8 offering Three Ways to Get Involved in Climate Advocacy - locally at the Casa, statewide with AZIPL, and nationally with CCC (Catholic Climate Covenant). Two hundred twenty eight (228) community members signed a CCC Petition to President Trump urging him to honor the Paris Agreement.

Several C4C members attended Arizona’s Energy Resilience Summit hosted in part by Citizens’ Climate Lobby and ASU’s Sustainability Department on January 10 at the Desert Botanical Gardens. Local and global speakers encouraged increased advocacy efforts around climate solutions.


The Recycling Committee arranged a tour of the Waste Management Recycling facility in Surprise on January 17 as
part of its efforts in improving and expanding recycling at the Casa.

- Participated with AZIPL, AFN, and CAIR Arizona in “Interfaith Action for the Earth,” at the State Capitol on January 22. An additional 45 parties signed the CCC Petition to the President.

- Members of C4C attended a three-part film series and discussion on Faith and Food Justice offered by AZIPL at The Fountains Church in Fountain Hills.

- Hosted a Hospitality Table on February 4&5 to provide information on Two More Ways to Get Involved in Climate Advocacy, including participating in Environmental Day at the Legislature and attending the six-week Lenten Laudato Si Class.

- Facilitated understanding Laudato Si, a Lenten Class using Fr. Dan Horan’s powerful video series, with discussion on ways to respond to the Pope’s call.

- Facilitated creation of and a series of meetings with a working group of representatives from several organizations, including among others the FRC, Valley Interfaith Project, Environment Arizona, Citizens Climate Lobby, AZIPL, members of the SRP Board of Directors, Arizona PIRG, and CASE, to plan meetings with each of the Arizona Corporation Commissioners to give citizen input on the APS Rate Plan Proposal.

- Using a template from Interfaith Power and Light, created a Lenten Carbon Fast 2017 Calendar for our community, offering wisdom from Pope Francis and daily suggestions for ways to reduce our carbon footprint. The calendars were enclosed in the Bulletins on the weekend of March 5&6.

- Participated in Environmental Day at the Legislature organized by the Sierra Club on February 15. Discussions with legislators focused on public lands, water, wildlife, and ballot initiative measures.

- Participated in the Phoenix Accountability Event Press Conference on March 17, the first monthly event in a year-long campaign in 5 states, targeting our Senators and their support for climate deniers in the new administration.
● Participated with AZIPL on March 18 in the Rio Salado Walk at a former landfill site to promote community engagement, public health, wellness, and sustainability awareness.

● Attended and provided public comment on the APS Rate Proposal at the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC) Public Hearing on March 22.

● On March 23, attended AZIPL’s Eco-Activism - Loving Earth Annual Meeting featuring keynotes speaking on Food justice and clean, renewable energy.

● Hosted Creation Connection Movie Night on April 7 at the Casa with the documentary, *Time to Choose*, which explores the scope of the climate change crisis and examines the power of solutions already available. Forty-three participants signed 58 postcards provided by Citizens Climate Lobby to Senators Flake and McCain regarding climate change.

● Hosted Ministry Table at the Casa’s Coffee House on April 22 with a Plastic Film Recycling Display and supplies for visitors to create their own Prayer Flag re: the environment. The Film display and Prayer Flags were also available in the Hospitality area the next day after all of the Masses.

● C4C members and many Casa community members participated in the People’s Climate March at the Arizona State Capitol in downtown Phoenix on Earth Day, April 29. Over 50 Prayer Flags created at the Casa were carried in the march, along with dozens of others created that day.

● One member of C4C participated in the Climate March in Washington D.C. on that day, carrying Prayer flags representing the Care for Creation community. While there, she visited the offices of Senators McCain and Flake to deliver the Citizens Climate Lobby postcards signed on April 7 to their respective Staffs.

● Attended the April 26 Civic Academy hosted by Valley Interfaith Project re: the Arizona Corporation Commission. Gave presentation encouraging involvement in advocacy work to accomplish our vision of achieving a sustainable world.

● Arizona Interfaith Power and Light (AZIPL) has various committees that work on yearly goals to protect the environment. Two members of C4C are on the Congregational Relations Committee which is the liaison between AZIPL and partner/prospective congregations. Ten new Catholic parishes
have expressed interest in AZIPL in the past year due to outreach by the C4C members.

● Contribute on a regular basis to the AZIPL Blog with information on C4C activities and Casa happenings.

● Work with the Earth Care Commission on planning next steps in their Environmental Racism Project.

● Hosted Hospitality Tables in October and December to support a Chispa (a League of Conservation Voters program) initiative to urge Governor Ducey to use the $59M VW Settlement funds Arizona will receive to invest in zero emission school buses across the state. Ninety-six postcards to the Governor were signed and delivered. At a follow up event, over 100 community members signed a petition to the Governor to reiterate the need for the money to be used for clean energy buses.

● At Creation Connection Movie Night on October 27, screened the documentary, Viva la Verde, a conservation film about the Verde River in Arizona. The film’s Producer and Director joined us to lead a Q&A and Discussion. Thirty-three community members and guests attended and signed a Sierra Club petition regarding water issues in Arizona.

● Attended Citizens Climate Lobby’s Regional Conference in November to explore effective advocacy strategies for dialoguing with state legislators re: climate change.

● Distributed copies to community members of Global Catholic Climate Movement’s Advent Calendar, which invites us to pray the Joy of Advent to include all of Creation.

2016

● Offered an adult formation program, Faith Encounters the Ecological Crisis, from JustFaith Ministries during Lent.

● Provided a C4C representative on AZIPL’s standing Congregational Relations Committee, to assist in growing AZIPL’s membership base.
• Received AZIPL’s SAGE (Spirited Activists Greening the Earth) Award, for our steadfast support of their mission to mobilize people of faith in Arizona to reduce the causes of climate change. The award was so designated to signify both wisdom and the healing aspect of the sage plant used in Native American ceremonies.

• Created Care for Creation Easter Calendar with daily EcoTips and quotes from Pope Francis, published on the Casa’s Facebook page for the 50 days of the Easter Season beginning on Easter Day. Paper copies also available in the Lobby.

• The Care for Creation Ministry was named Runner Up in Interfaith Power & Light’s 2015 Cool Congregations Challenge in the Inspiration Category.

• Participated in the Ministry Fair at the April 2016 Casa Coffee House, along with 10 other Faith in Action Ministries. Promoted the C4C team, and sold Laudato Si Note Cards to raise additional funds for the Monarch Butterfly Waystation at the Casa.

• Hosted the April 2106 Creation Connection Movie Night at the Casa in partnership with Waste Not, a local food rescue organization. Seventy-seven guests joined us for dinner, the movie Just Eat It, and discussion. Comments were overwhelmingly positive and appreciative of the opportunity to learn about food waste in our country and ways to combat it.

• Hosted an Earth Day table in Hospitality after all of the Masses. Provided opportunity for the community to sign a petition to Congressional Leaders urging them to ensure the U.S. keeps the promises made in the Paris Agreement. Educated on plastics recycling, local Farmer’s Market schedules, and the ongoing Sustainability efforts at the Casa. Discussed the excellent power output results from the Assisi Lodge solar panels, and encouraged members to sign up to receive information on future renewable energy opportunities.

• On the 1st Anniversary of Laudato Si in June, hosted a table in Hospitality to provide information on the Encyclical, including Fr. Thomas Reese’s excellent Reading Guide, and handouts on Catholic Social Teaching related to Care for Creation.
AZIPL welcomed one of our C4C members to their Board of Directors to represent the Casa in AZIPL’s mission to help people of faith put their faith into action and reduce the effects of global warming.

Worked with the FRC’s Architect to research LEED Silver certification for the new Our Lady of the Angels Church, and produced a series of articles for the bulletin to educate the community on the steps being taken to achieve exceptional environmental benefits and performance.

Hosted a table in Hospitality in October just prior to the Presidential Election to hand out Interfaith Power & Light’s (IPL) Voting Guide and encourage community members to exercise their right to vote responsibly.

Welcomed nearly 40 community members and guests to dinner and a showing of Racing Extinction, a film that exposes the issues of endangered species and mass extinction. A lively discussion followed.

Participated in the Fair Trade Sale at the Casa on December 4, selling Laudato Si Note Cards to raise funds for the Monarch Butterfly Waystation.

Attended a Public Hearing of the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC) on rooftop solar programs in the state.

The Recycling Sub-committee continued research on improving recycling efforts at the Casa, and supported Staff’s efforts to replace all non-recyclable containers with products that are recyclable. Worked with Staff to create and display improved signage to educate our community and guests on proper recycling habits.

Completed weather-stripping on more than 50 lodging rooms; began work to replace all door sweeps. Supplies totaling $1400 were donated by area businesses, and volunteers did all of the work.
• Visited JustFaith and RCIA classes to describe C4C and the projects we work on to inspire the participants to identify their own calling to serve others.

• Offered an adult formation program, Franciscan Care for Creation, from the Franciscan Action Network.

• Worked in conjunction with other local groups, such as Arizona Interfaith Power & Light (AZIPL) and the Earth Care Commission (ECC), on common issues around the environment.

• At AZIPL’s Solar Forum, provided a speaker on the Casa’s solar project with advice for other faith communities considering installing solar.

• Participated in a documentary produced by graduate students in ASU’s School of Sustainability about AZIPL’s environmental mission and actions taken by faith communities, including the Casa’s solar installation.

• Provided list of Eco-Tips to the Communications Staff for inclusion in the bulletin periodically.

• Worked with Staff in creating web page for ministry.

• Hosted Creation Connection Movie Nights, as well as the screening of a 9 part documentary, Years of Living Dangerously, including discussion.

• Participated in rally and public meeting at SRP headquarters to protest pending rate increases to solar customers.

• Hosted Earth Day events with the Franciscan Action Circle, including opportunity for community members to sign the Paris Pledge and postcards to Senators urging them to support the EPA’s pollution standards.

• Created a Recycling Subcommittee to research opportunities for improvement at the Casa. Introduced a replacement cup, which is made from recycled materials and is also recyclable, for styrofoam coffee cups. A year’s supply was donated.

• Established a Solar Subcommittee to research expanding the use of renewable energy for the purpose of reducing our dependence on nonsustainable energy sources. Installed solar panels on the 32 room Assisi Lodge, powering Assisi and 3 nearby buildings, providing 10% of the electricity the Casa uses each year, and preventing substantial CO2
emissions into the atmosphere. The expense was covered with a generous donation.

- Hosted a Solar Dedication and Blessing for the community to celebrate this outward sign of our Franciscan commitment to environmental stewardship.
- Upon release of Pope Francis’ Encyclical, *Laudato Si, On Care for our Common Home*, the Care for Creation Ministry and the Franciscan Action Circle launched a series of offerings aimed at education and empowerment. These included:
  - Lectures on the document by Fr. Bill Cieslak exploring major themes, and subsequent Community Conversations for further discussion;
  - *Pope Francis Speaks* event to watch and discuss his addresses to Congress and the United Nations;
  - Hospitality Table events to educate members on meaningful individual actions, including free reusable bags and CFL bulbs donated by local businesses;
  - Prayer Praise Photo collage set to St. Francis’ *Canticle of the Creatures*;
  - Sale to community members of milkweed plants, which attract Monarch Butterflies;
  - Laudato Si Art Project to create and sell Note Cards to raise funds for a Monarch Butterfly Waystation at the Casa;
  - Collecting signatures on climate petitions;
  - Act on Climate Change AZ event in downtown Phoenix to amplify the Pope’s call for decisive action at the Paris Climate Talks.
- Added 10 new members to the C4C team.
- Accumulated 888 volunteer hours for the year.

2014

- Encouraged our Casa community to take the “St. Francis Pledge” to care for creation and the poor.
• Provided information at numerous Hospitality Table events regarding reducing our carbon footprint and promoting conservation and sustainability.
• Hosted Creation Connection Movie Nights and Discussion to explore ecological issues and share ways we can better care for creation together.
• Researched power consumption of 13 meeting room refrigerators and replaced 9 of them with Energy Star rated models resulting in a 78% decrease in energy usage, and annual savings of $1200. The $5000 expense was covered with a generous donation.
• Began work, with volunteer help, to install weather-stripping on all lodging rooms.
• Accumulated 400 volunteer hours for the year.