

*Living The Earth Charter
Saint Matthew's Church
Bedford, New York*

The Earth Charter is a comprehensive statement of principles for a just, participatory, sustainable and peaceful global society for the 21st century and beyond. It is composed of four core principles, supported by 12 additional principles with numerous related initiatives. The Vestry of Saint Matthew's Church has unanimously endorsed the Earth Charter, and we currently live its principles in the following specific ways:

1. As an "Engaged Endorser" (see www.earthcharter.org), in accordance with our pledge, we are :
 - Promoting the Earth Charter by seeking its endorsement by the Episcopal Diocese of New York.
 - Contributing to Earth Charter-inspired initiatives through the activities of the Commissions and Committees of our church.
 - Implementing the Earth Charter principles by seeking to inspire our parishioners and our community through worship services and a variety of secular activities.

2. We are fortunate to have 65 acres of woodlands, comprised of our Glebe and the Ketchum Sanctuary, all open to the public. The care and oversight of this remarkable property (5b) is entrusted to our Woodlands Commission who actively maintain trails through the entire area as well as sponsor visits by summer camps, boys and girls clubs and other interested organizations.

3. Saint Matthew's was host to a recent Diocesan Conference on the environment, "The Christian Care of Creation". We hope to act as host for more of these events in the future focusing on the general subject of the role of religion and the community in supporting and implementing sustainable living and development.(4a & b)

4. Under the supervision of our Property Commission, Saint Matthew's has initiated a facility-wide conservation and sustainability survey (7a) which will result in action plans by October, 2008. As part of this initiative, the Property Commission has engaged the New York State Energy Conservation and Development Authority (NYSERDA) to perform an audit of our three main buildings, the Fellowship Hall, the Rectory and the Church itself. Appropriate energy conservation steps (7b) will be implemented immediately thereafter and the results of the audit will be shared with other area churches through the Interdenominational Council.

5. Saint Matthew's supports the intellectual potential of our congregation and our community by offering presentations by a variety of Distinguished Speakers on current affairs and other topics of interest. We also support the artistic interests of our congregation and community with an annual program of five chamber music performances of exceptional quality, known as the Bedford Chamber Concerts.(1b)

6. In September, 2007 we joined with our neighbor, Antioch Baptist Church, to offer a most successful joint fund raising evening event, "Raise The Roof", the proceeds of which (\$200,000) went to expand and regenerate the Antioch parish hall. This initiative resulted from the longstanding, regular fellowship between the two churches and the realization that by working together across races and traditions both churches could achieve potential that neither could achieve alone.(1a & 12a)

7. Receipt of a substantial bequest in 1994 gave Saint Matthew's Church significantly increased power (2b) to promote and directly contribute to the common good. Under the supervision of our Bedell Committee and the Vestry, the entire income generated by the invested bequest is devoted to outreach. This has resulted in more than 30 grants to Episcopal Churches for capital projects that they were unable to fund themselves. The grants included assistance in successful realization of the projects being funded. Recipient churches were often of historic cultural and spiritual significance.(12d)

8. Once per year Saint Matthew's does a "Blessing of the Pets" at our main family service (15a) at 10.00am. All manner of pets are presented in the church, including a horse and a pair of goats! Particularly for children it is a memorable occasion.

9. Our Christian Education Commission is currently considering materials on sustainability to be added to the curriculum for Sunday School as well as adult education opportunities in September, 2008 (14a & d).

10. Saint Matthew's Church will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the consecration of our Sanctuary in October 2010 as well as the celebration of our Churchyard and Glebe which are of approximately the same vintage (4b). One weekend each October since 2005 has been focused on one aspect or another of the history of our church, with entertaining family oriented events to ensure that treasured traditions and values are celebrated and passed on to future generations.

Every church can live the Earth Charter in its own way. A representative of Saint Matthew's Church would be happy to consult with any church in the Diocese on this opportunity. For contact information, see www.stmatthewsbedford.org .

NB Notations in parentheses refer to the relevant Principles of the Earth Charter.