

GLENVIEW

‘We cannot sit still’ Faith leaders address climate change at Glenview prayer service

By Karie Angell Luc

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In the processional, first row from left are Rev. Jeremiah Boland, pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church and Rev. Fr. Richard Demetrius Andrews of Saints Peter and Paul Greek Orthodox Church in Glenview during the ninth annual Solemn Vespers for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation at Our Lady of Perpetual Help (OLPH) Church (1775 Grove St.) on Aug. 31, 2023. (Karie Angell Luc/Pioneer Press)

The Archdiocese of Chicago and the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago gathered in Glenview on Aug. 31 to observe the ninth annual Solemn Vespers for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation.

The prayer service at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Glenview (1775 Grove St.) highlighted conservation efforts by the local Christian community and welcomed people of all faiths to learn about environmental missives and steps individuals could take to care for the planet.

“If you look at this past summer with the ever increasing world temperature, fires, melting ice caps, everything that we were warned about years ago, is coming into fruition,” said Rev. Jeremiah Boland, pastor of OLPH. “And the urgency of the human community tackling this crisis has never been more critical.”



From left to right are Rev. Jeremiah Boland, pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church and Rev. Robert G. Casey, bishop and vicar general of the Archdiocese of Chicago at the ninth annual Solemn Vespers for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation at Our Lady of Perpetual Help (OLPH) Church (1775 Grove St.) on Aug. 31, 2023. (Karie Angell Luc/Pioneer Press)

Michael Terrien of Highland Park, co-coordinator, Care for Creation Ministry, Office of Human Dignity and Solidarity for the Archdiocese of Chicago, said about the annual event, “It’s essential, it’s a witness to our Christian unity to care for our common home (Earth).”

In 1989, the late Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I of Constantinople designated Sept. 1 as a day of prayer for Orthodox Christians. In 2015, Pope Francis established Sept. 1 as the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation for Catholics.

Rev. Robert G. Casey, bishop and vicar general of the Archdiocese of Chicago, presided at the Thursday evening ecumenical service with the local Greek Orthodox community. On Sept. 1, the Greek Orthodox Church also celebrates the ecclesiastical new year.

Casey was joined at the 7 p.m. occasion by Rev. Fr. Richard Demetrius Andrews of Saints Peter and Paul Greek Orthodox Church in Glenview (1401 Wagner Rd.) and Rev. Sotirios P. Malamis of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago and parish priest of Ascension of our Lord Greek Orthodox Church of Lincolnshire.

OLPH and Saints Peter and Paul Greek Orthodox Church take turns each year hosting the yearly event.

“We always have to be good stewards of the environment, whatever we do, wherever we are, in whatever way that we can, small ways, big ways,” Andrews said.

This year featured the unveiling of a handwritten document called the Ecumenism Metro Chicago (EMC)-Chicagoland Christians United for the Care of Creation’s Declaration for the Care of Creation.



Center, front, Michael Terrien of Highland Park, co-coordinator, Care for Creation Ministry, Office of Human Dignity and Solidarity for the Archdiocese of Chicago, is among attendees at the ninth annual Solemn Vespers for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation at Our Lady of Perpetual Help (OLPH) Church (1775 Grove St.) on Aug. 31, 2023. (Karie Angell Luc/Pioneer Press)

The document and declaration features signatures by more than one dozen judicatories or their representatives after a ceremony at the 2023 Parliament of the World’s Religions in Chicago last Aug. 17.

“We put a lot of work into that,” Terrien said about the document. “The beautiful thing is it shows that we are united, no matter what church we’re from, we are united in our common faith to care for our common home.”

The religious declaration states that people are, “responsible for protecting and preserving what is the Creator’s, for all of the Earth is the Lord’s.”

The document was displayed at OLPH on a large stand. Many people took photos of the declaration.

“I represented the Archdiocese of Chicago,” Bishop Casey said of the signing of the document. “And we stood on the platform and we prayed and we signed this declaration ... it was a beautiful moment.

“But afterward, I ran into this gentleman who was not Christian and he asked me what that was going on,” Casey recalled.



Center, Rev. Jim Barrett of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, is among viewers of the Ecumenism Metro Chicago (EMC)-Chicagoland Christians United for the Care of Creation's Declaration for the Care of Creation at the ninth annual Solemn Vespers for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation at Our Lady of Perpetual Help (OLPH) Church (1775 Grove St.) on Aug. 31, 2023. (Karie Angell Luc/Pioneer Press)

stirs us.

"It's awakening us to those small things that we can do each day in order to offer better care for creation."

During the service, Casey told attendees in church that caring for the world is urgent and that change starts with everyone immediately.

"We cannot sit still," Casey said.

George P. Nassos of Glenview, with the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago said, "Let's all assume that it's real, climate change is real and we all do something about it."



Rev. Fr. Richard Demetrius Andrews of Saints Peter and Paul Greek Orthodox Church in Glenview during the ninth annual Solemn Vespers for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation at Our Lady of Perpetual Help (OLPH) Church (1775 Grove St.) on Aug. 31, 2023. (Karie Angell Luc/Pioneer Press)

"And I said, 'We just signed a declaration for the care of creation,' and he looked at me and he said, 'And?'"

"And it was the best thing he could have said to me because I said, 'Sir, you're exactly right.'"

"What we do is not simply sign a declaration or gather for an evening of prayer, we commit ourselves to action," Casey added.

"That becomes the hope that I have ... that it

After the service, people could gather for a McDonnell Hall reception and lecture by Sarah Elizabeth Ippel who spoke on a topic called, "A Chicago Model for Cultivating a Sustainable and Just Future."

Ippel is a Chicago education expert who founded a public elementary school and has dedicated two decades to cultivating the future of learning and thriving in diverse communities of all economic resources.

“We may not always see eye to eye, and not always agree with one another, but at the end of the day, we’re all here on this one planet with our collective future,” Ippel said.

“We all have a role to play in cultivating this next generation to be mindful leaders to take positive action,” Ippel said, and, “to really solve these challenges in our world and to really make the world a more sustainable and equitable place for everyone.”

Karie Angell Luc is a freelancer for Pioneer Press.