

“Faith and Environment” Event Considers Sabbath as Part of Earth Care

By George Kaplan

About sixty people representing many faith groups met on October 14 at Camp Wright to talk about how our concepts of sabbath can influence the work of restoring the Earth. The Diocese of Easton was an active partner in organizing the day, which also included participation from Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake (IPC), the Chester Valley Ministers’ Association, the

Unitarian-Universalists of the Chester River, the Maryland & Greater Washington Chapter of Interfaith Power and Light (IPL), the Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN), and the Pickering Creek Audubon Center. The title for the all-day event was “Faith and Environment: Learning What We Can from the Concepts of Sabbath.”

Following welcoming remarks by Bishop Shand and Dee Zeller, director of Camp Wright, the morning program featured two keynote speakers, Fr. Allen LaMontagne of St. Paul’s, Kent, and Rabbi Nina Beth



Sassafras Riverkeeper Emmett Duke discusses pollution issues in the Chesapeake watershed.

Cardin of Baltimore. Presentations explored how the Judeo-Christian concept of sabbath, God’s day of rest in the creation story and the subject of the 4th Commandment, speaks to us as we seek to be better stewards of the Earth. The

third keynote speaker was a local Native American leader, Chief Sewell “Winterhawk” Fitzhugh, who provided a reflection on these ideas from the perspective of the Nause Waiwash band of people who have lived on the lower Eastern Shore since long before Europeans arrived.

The afternoon program for the event was quite practical, with presentations on local environmental issues from IPC, IPL, CCAN, and Audubon staff. Taking advantage of Camp Wright’s setting and the wonderful weather, there were outdoor demonstrations by a local river keeper, a forester, and master gardeners. A closing ritual, held in Camp Wright’s outdoor amphitheater overlooking the Chesapeake Bay, capped the day’s activities.



Bishop Shand talks with Pete Sauerbrey (St. Mary Anne’s, North East) and Nanna Bailey (St. Paul’s, Kent) on beach at Camp Wright.



Chief Winterhawk talks about his people’s beliefs about the Earth and the creator.



Sassafras Riverkeeper Emmett Duke demonstrates how water samples are taken.



Rev. Jane Ayers leads closing ceremony.

George Kaplan is the chair of the Environmental Ministries Commission and worships at St. Mary Anne’s, North East, Md.

Photos by Scott Smith and George Kaplan