

2015 NRCCC Prayer Breakfast and “Washington Week”

The annual “Washington Week” is usually held in late winter, however this year the NRCCC gathering was timed with the visit of Pope Francis to the United States as well as to gather momentum for the upcoming COP21 climate talks in Paris.

NRCCC hosted its National Prayer Breakfast Monday September 21 at the Capitol Hill Lutheran Church. Co-chairs Rabbi Warren Stone and Rev. Owen Owens once again superbly emceed the event. Fred Krueger provided the breakfast food and reiterated the Interfaith Protocol in which each participant exhibits the full expression of his or her faith while respecting that of others. Rabbi Fred Scherlinder Dobb, Rev. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas, and Rev. Tom Carr led opening prayers.

Patrick Carolan, Director of the Franciscan Action Network, gave the keynote speech on *Laudato Si*, the Papal Encyclical on Care for Our Common Home. Responses were given by Rachel Lamb, Evangelical Environmental Network, Youth coordinator; Rabbi Fred Scherlinder Dobb, COEJL, Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation; and Rev. Dr. Gerald L. Durley, pastor emeritus, Providence Missionary Baptist Church, and Georgia Interfaith Power and Light.

Rev. Tom Carr and Dr. Lise Van Susteran gave reports on their presentation of the 2015 Steward of God's Creation award to HAH Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. Others giving reports, prayers, and announcements included Connie Hanson, Allen Johnson, Farley Lord Smith, Johanna Bozuwa, Cindy Harris, Fr. Sergei Kapral, Rev. Jim Antal, and Dave Carroll.

After the prayer breakfast and following days, members visited 29 US Senate offices plus many others from the House of Representatives. These included Senator Majority Leader Mitch McConnell from Kentucky; Ted Cruz from Texas; Marco Rubio from Florida; Rand Paul also from Kentucky; Shelly Capito from West Virginia; Ron Johnson from Wisconsin; Jeff Flake from Arizona; plus many others. The goal was to focus especially on those senators who did not yet understand in the public pronouncements why global climate change is an urgent moral, ethical, and religious issue.

Pope Francis was in Washington, DC during this week focusing on many of the same NRCCC principles of responsible care for creation.