

EarthCare Connections

Fostering awareness of our spiritual oneness with the earth and promoting active care of creation.

www.unityworldwideministries.org/earthcare earthcare@unity.org

*The earth does not belong to us; we belong to the earth. This we know.
All things are connected like the blood that unites one family.*

Chief Seattle

Earth Day 2023



Earth Day, April 22nd is fast approaching and there are many ways in which your congregation can get involved. For example Interfaith Power & Light (IPL) (<https://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/>) has a number of activities you can join or use to create your own environmental stewardship and climate action program. They also are sponsoring Climate Action Week April 14-23, 2023, the theme of which is “Living the Golden Rule: Just Transition to a clean Energy economy.” IPL provides resources to help you *preach, teach and take action on climate justice. Find worship resources, an organizer’s kit to help you make it the best week of the year for your congregation, a*

national Earth Day Prayer for all to pray along with, a film to screen for your congregation, and an advocacy opportunity.

The goal of **EARTHDAY.ORG** (<https://www.earthday.org/>) is to provide the resources needed for activated citizens to act, innovate and implement activities that bring together businesses, governments and citizens. Its theme for Earth Day 2023 is, “Invest in our Planet,” which highlights the importance of dedicating our time, resources, and energy to solving climate change and other environmental issues. Investing in our planet is necessary to protect it and the best way to pave a path towards a prosperous future. Their tool kit contains everything you need for meaningful activities.

They also have an [Fashion for the Earth](#) campaign tackles fashion’s environmental impacts, including waste and climate change, head on. We’re spreading awareness worldwide of the perils of the fast fashion industry while partnering with fashion leaders and companies to advocate for sustainability. Visit their store where you can buy **100% organic clothing and tote bags**.

A third organization is the **Sunrise Movement** (<https://www.sunrisemovement.org>). This energetic organization is building a movement of young people across race and class to stop the climate crisis and win a Green New Deal. As they say, *We’re on a mission to put everyday people back in charge and build a world that works for all of us, now and for generations to come. Join us for a 1-hr video call to connect with people like you across the country, hear our plan to win, and find your home in the movement.*

In addition, EarthCare offers ideas for a number of ideas and resources that can be used by all types of spiritual centers.

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For example, whether you own or rent your facility you can replace light bulbs with florescent or LED, adopt office policies that reduce/ reuse/recycle or require purchase of environmentally friendly products, and place Goodwill or Big Brother/Sister recycling bins on your property (with landlord permission for renters).

And the list goes on!

- Advocate for environmental and social justice issues. For more information, search the internet for “environmental And social issue organizations.”
- Offer classes promoting the environment or educating congregants regarding sustainability issues.
- Use the [Co2 emissions fact sheet](#) website and/or the document on the website entitled *Carbon Dioxide (CO2) Saved Annually per Average Household*, calculate the eco savings congregations are saving by having a virtual ministry.
- Start a Zoom environmental book club.
- Invite congregants to watch eco-documentaries on Discovery+ or Netflix, then have a Zoom meeting to discuss.
- Have a monthly outdoor nature activity.
- Develop a community and/or meditation garden.
- Include Earth prayers in Sunday services, meditations and in monthly or quarterly newsletters.
- Build a Labyrinth for reflecting on our connection with all creation.
- Mention care for the earth, air, water, and all living things in the weekly meditation.
- Include an Earth Prayer in monthly or quarterly newsletters.
- Create a consciousness for the work through prayer by affirming and promoting the interdependent web of existence and by acknowledging our deep connections with the natural world and with our living planet.
- Dedicate Sunday services, more than once a year, to the vision of EarthCare that, ***All humanity lives in a spiritual consciousness that manifests as loving co-existence with all creation and care for our Earth home.***
- Periodically have special ceremonies that honor our connectedness with the natural world, such as:
 - ▶ Have a “Turning of the Seasons” ceremony. See Resources at our Facebook Page or on the EarthCare webpage.
 - ▶ Conduct the “Blessing of the Waters” ceremony. See Resources at our Facebook Page or on the EarthCare webpage.
 - ▶ Hold Sunday services outdoors.
 - ▶ Create a sacred table can be adorned to reflect the season and its spiritual gift.
 - ▶ Have a Labyrinth walk.
 - ▶ Hold tree blessing ceremonies.
 - ▶ Medicine wheel ceremonies.
 - ▶ Have "Animal Blessing Sunday." Pets are brought to church to be blessed. A popular time to hold this is near the Feast of St. Francis (Oct. 3).
- Go on an “Earth Day walk at the Zoo.”
- Clean a local stream, park or highway.
- Many communities have walks to commemorate Earth Day or Earth Month. Create a team and participate.
- Have a field trip and hike in a local park or nature preserve. Finish the day with a picnic or dinner at a restaurant.
- Conduct Advent through Epiphany services that honor the mineral, plant, animal, and human kingdoms.
- Dedicate the month of April to the elements. Feature a different aspect of the environment each week.
- Fly prayer flags from the church building.
- Develop a seven-week series on an inspirational book on caring for the earth.
- Visit a sacred site near your church.

Whatever you choose, you will be calling attention to our oneness with the natural world and our co-inhabitants.

Earth Month Eco-Challenge

Join the "Unity EarthCare" team by taking the Earth Challenge for April. This is our 2nd year we have a team. We invite you to learn/share how to make a difference on our planet home. at <https://earthmonth.ecochallenge.org/>

The Ecochallenge¹ transforms the United Nation's 17 categories of Sustainability Development Goals (SDG) into 5 categories of daily and one-time actions an individual can make. "Ecochallenge believes the solution to the planet's biggest challenges lies in the power of collective action. By taking action in our own lives an inspiring the people around us, each of us contributes to a world of impact."

Teams can choose from the following five categories:

Climate and Ecosystem

IMMEDIATE CLIMATE ACTION THAT PROTECTS & RESTORES ECOSYSTEMS ON LAND & BELOW WATER

The UN is determined to take climate action to address the threats of climate change and its effects. Social and economic development depends on the conservation and sustainability of natural resources on land and in water to protect biodiversity, ecosystems, and wildlife.

Economy and Communities

CLEAN ENERGY & RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURES THROUGH RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION & PRODUCTION

The UN recognizes that inclusive and sustainable economic development is essential for prosperity. This is achieved through dynamic, innovative, and people-centered economies and increasing economic capacity through affordable clean energy, consumption reduction, and resilient infrastructure.

Health and Equality

PEACE, JUSTICE, EQUALITY, AND GOOD HEALTH FOR ALL

The UN envisions a peaceful world with equity, justice, health care, and respect for all races, ethnicities, and cultural diversity.

In this world, women and girls enjoy full gender empowerment across economic, legal, and social levels.

Education and Livelihood

EQUITABLE EDUCATION & FULFILLING LIVELIHOODS WHILE CREATING INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

The UN recognizes that equitable education needs to be available for all along with productive employment and decent work. Both education and decent work are crucial for sustainable communities that create a good quality of life by reducing the negative impacts of activities that are hazardous to human health and the environment.

Basic Needs and Security

ENDING POVERTY & HUNGER WHILE PROVIDING CLEAN WATER & ACCESSIBLE SANITATION FOR ALL

The UN recognizes that eradicating poverty is the greatest global challenge for sustainable development. The UN works to support all people who experience poverty, food insecurity, water scarcity, or inaccessible sanitation.

For each of these areas there are specific actions you can take. It's an easy way to get involved and make a difference in the world.

¹Ecochallenge.org is a registered 501©3 nonprofit under EIN 93-1-75047. Donations are tax-deductible and greatly appreciated.

Green Star Award Applications Accepted until May 15

Applications for the 2023 Green Star Award will be accepted until **May 15, 2023**. The award recognizes any Unity congregations that have completed at least three significant environmental activities in calendar year **2022** that foster awareness of our spiritual oneness with the Earth and promote active care of creation for the environment. **Your congregation need not be certified under the EarthCare Program to apply.**

The application can be found on EarthCare's webpage and on our Facebook page under, "resources."

Unity of Walnut Creek Completes The Path to EarthCare

Unity of Walnut Creek, CA has completed a twelve (12) year journey to completion of The Path to EarthCare. Led by Senior Minister, Rev. Kristin Powel, President/Chair of the Board Richard Flounder and environmental program leader Lee Sparling, they have integrated care for the earth into its ministry. Unity of Walnut Creek's achievement has been recognized by the EarthCare Team with Certificate of Achievement at Level C, making them just the twenty fourth congregation in Unity to do so.



Earth Team Photo Under the Redwoods



Children's Unity Garden

CONGRATULATIONS Unity of Walnut Creek for your long term commitment to protecting and preserving our environment!

If you would like to join the EarthCare family, download the EarthCare Program on the [EarthCare webpage](#). You also may contact any of the EarthCare representatives in your region, who is listed below. Finally, join our monthly mentoring call program. It is an excellent forum to connect with others and learn more.

EarthCare YouTube Channel

Hosted by Mary Gerken, numerous videos are available on [EarthCare's YouTube channel](#) to provide a wealth of information in the areas of Social Justice, Educational, Spiritual, Poems and Inspiration, and Music.

Mentoring/Collaborative Calls

Mary Gerken hosts these calls on the third Saturday of each month, at 11 a.m. (CT). A different topic is highlighted each time. One of the benefits of participating in these calls is that they provide a way for you to connect with other churches in your respective region and open new avenues to collaborate. If you would like to be on the mailing list, please email Mary, at agreatpickle@gmail.com.



Facebook

Beth Remmes administers EarthCare's Facebook Page. To date, 1500 followers have discovered the timely resources and interchange of ideas that it contains.



Please check it out by going to: www.facebook.com/UnityEarthCare

Have Questions? Here's Who to Contact.

For general questions, please email **Brenda Hicks-Wiggins** at earthcare@unity.org or call 816.524.7414. You also may contact the following:

Region	Contact	Email Address
Canada	Mike McCord	michael_mccord@sbcglobal.net
Eastern	Martha Powers	mpowers7@gmail.com
Eastern	Mary Gerken	agreatpickle@gmail.com
Great Lakes	Kathy Harwood Long	kathyharwoodlong@gmail.com
Northwest	Cylvia Hayes	cylvia@3estrategies.org
West Central	Mary Gerken	agreatpickle@gmail.com
Pacific Rim	Cylvia Hayes	cylvia@3estrategies.org
South Central	Mike McCord	michael_mccord@sbcglobal.net
South East	Beth Remmes	bremmes@hotmail.com
South West	David Cordova	davecordova@msn.com

Some Final Thoughts

Recently I attended a presentation by Chick Keller, senior executive with Black & Veatch entitled, ***Climate Change: If, When, & Where Will Panic Ensnare?*** His presentation was a sobering reminder of just how dire the climate crisis is and the herculean task facing humanity to slow or reverse the atmosphere from reaching the runaway global warming tipping point of 400 ppb of CO₂. Frankly, the odds aren't good.

Even if all the goals of existing technologies identified at the Paris Climate Conference are reached (i.e., electric vehicle, solar, wind, batteries, regenerative farming, LED lighting & efficient buildings), it will only meet 50% of the required CO₂ reduction. To solve the last half of the problem will require new technologies. Sadly, we don't even have a plan for some of the major CO₂ producers such as cement, steel, plastic and airplanes. If we don't, the results will be catastrophic for life on this planet as we know.

But here's the good news. Europe, China, India and the U.S. are accelerating the manufacture and installation of wind, solar, batteries and electric vehicles. In the U.S., the Infrastructure Bill and Inflation Reduction Act funds 17 National Energy Labs, Four Carbon removal prototype projects, tax credits for wind and solar, incentives to build electric cars, batteries solar and wind. Over \$51 billion of projects and technologies are in development prototype stage. Even major oil companies are investing billions new technologies.

So there is hope but even while 98% of scientific papers agree there is a problem. Each state, city, business and person has different interests and attitudes towards climate change. But a sense of urgency doesn't seem to exist in a majority of the population. In a recent survey, only the youth (e.g., 18-35) considers climate change the number one problem. This is a world war and we need a focused effort by everybody. What is it going to take? Where do we go from here?

While I don't know the answer to that question, I do know that the solution starts with each of us. I believe everyone reading this article stands for a sustainable future. While doing our part as individuals is essential, we have to unite. As Van Jones once said, *when you stand up, you license other people to stand up. Now you stand up by yourself don't make a dad gum bit of difference—in the rational world. You're just one fool standing up. But have you ever seen a standing ovation? It starts with one fool standing up. And then pretty soon the whole stadium is standing up, and it's a different moment.* So to be effective change agents, let's work together and with combined voices let our politicians know we



want investment in new technologies for solving climate change, and that we strongly resist any attempt to roll back actions that address this global crisis. Maybe doing so will create the sense of urgency that's needed to awaken the rest of the population and leave a livable planet for future generations.

Mike McCord, Editor and Team Leader