

# EARTH DAY 2006:

## *Caring for Creation*



Local communities of faith are finding new and creative ways of serving God by becoming congregations that care for creation. These congregations embrace an ecological mission as a fundamental component of their ministry. They use their worship services to contemplate the impacts humanity has upon our planet and to commit to practices that heal the earth.

This growing religious commitment to environmental stewardship takes many forms. Clergy incorporate stewardship themes into their worship and sermons. Congregations educate themselves and others about the decline of natural systems and ways to reverse this dire trend. They undertake environmental restoration projects in their communities. They pledge to live more simply and in harmony with the natural environment. They undertake energy audits and buy green power in order to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Above all, they explore and discover the profoundly religious, spiritual, and moral imperatives for environmental stewardship.

Earth Day 2006 provides a wonderful opportunity to strengthen the connection between communities of faith and the Earth. This Earth Day is focused on global warming and strategies to reverse this daunting threat. Its theme is “Climate Change Solutions” and it presents an opportunity for congregations across the country to undertake environmental educational programs. Additionally, communities of faith are encouraged to pursue clean energy projects that can markedly improve energy conservation in their communities which will also cumulatively effect national energy practices and policies.

Our religious “Earth Day in a Box” is designed to stimulate more environmental activity in communities of faith by spreading the word about faith-based organizations working on environmental issues, and by illustrating ways to get involved in similar initiatives. We hope that you will use it as a vehicle – and Earth Day 2006 as a catalyst – to strengthen your congregation’s connection to the Earth.

*Join us for Earth Day 2006, and take a moment to care for creation.*





[www.earthday.net](http://www.earthday.net)

Sen. Gaylord Nelson  
Founding Chair

Denis Hayes  
Chair

Kathleen Rogers  
President

Dear Friends,

Earth Day, celebrated every April 22<sup>nd</sup>, is fast approaching! We would like to invite your religious community to be a part of this historic day. This year's theme is Climate Change Solutions. We are encouraging individuals and communities nationwide to actively celebrate and raise awareness around climate change and energy conservation.

As you may know, climate change is now accepted as a major threat to our world's continued viability. We are now experiencing major upheavals in weather, agricultural production, fresh water availability, and a significant rise in sea levels from unrestrained carbon emissions. The impacts of climate change once thought of as unimaginable and farfetched are now occurring. Faith communities have been on the forefront of moral and commonsense arguments for taking action.

Earth Day is celebrated by millions of people annually. In 2006, we are looking forward to seeing 10,000 events held worldwide. Earth Day provides a wonderful opportunity to reaffirm the connection between your community and the Earth. This "Earth Day in a Box" contains the following:

- An Earth Day Newsletter insert
- Sample Earth Day Op-Ed
- Resources for Communities of Faith and Climate Change
- Organizer's Guide for Religious Student Groups
- Earth Day 2006 Event Registration Form

Feel free to use all or none of these aides and ideas, but please do think about engaging your congregation with some type of stewardship discussion such as:

- Engage in a stewardship sermon for Earth Day 2006
- Host a viewing of the EDN Religious Response to Climate Change web-cast
- Take on a suggested project from this guide
- Send us copies of your materials, media coverage, and success stories!

The EDN Religious Response to Climate Change web-cast will be available for download at [www.earthday.net](http://www.earthday.net), after April 21, 2006. For further information about the web-cast and Earth Day, please contact [edn-us@earthday.net](mailto:edn-us@earthday.net) or call our office at (202)518-0044.

Best wishes for a great Earth Day 2006 celebration!

Sincerely,

Earth Day Network

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Earth Day is April 22

# COMMUNITIES OF FAITH RESPOND TO

## *Global Climate Change*

The gradual depletion of the ozone layer and the “greenhouse effect” is now approaching critical as a consequence of industrial growth, massive concentrations and vastly increased energy needs and use. Industrial waste, the burning of fossil fuels, unrestricted deforestation, the use of certain types of herbicides, pesticides, coolants and propellants are all known to harm the atmosphere and environment. The resulting meteorological and atmospheric changes range from damage to health to the possible future submersions of low-lying lands.



related  
levels  
urban

“The problem of accelerated climate change exemplifies what has gone awry in the modern human project of dominating and managing nature for strictly human purposes of security and enrichment. In its causes and consequences it displays many of the worst injustices that prevail in relationships between rich and poor in the modern world. This threat to creation has brought the Christian community to new reflection on our faith. Through this reflection we Christians are reinterpreting our responsibility towards creation.”

*The World Council of Churches*

## NEWSLETTER PIECE FOR COMMUNITIES OF FAITH

In Recognition of Earth Day 2006



Earth Day, officially April 22<sup>nd</sup>, is celebrated globally by thousands of communities throughout the month of April as a collective expression of our hopes and dreams for a better world. Every year Earth Day Network picks a theme; this year's theme is Climate Change Solutions. Climate change is now accepted as a major threat to the world's continued viability. We are now experiencing major upheavals in weather, agricultural production, fresh water availability, and a significant rise in sea levels from unrestrained carbon emissions. Communities of faith are the beacons for justice in society and play a key role in shining a light on this serious threat to the Earth. Earth Day is a day for our community to come together to reflect on how we all can be effective stewards of God's creation and what role we as individuals and as a spiritual group can play in addressing this worldwide problem.

There are hundreds of ways – large and small, in your place of worship and at home – to recognize Earth Day and create your own Climate Change Solutions. Here are a few:

### *In your place of worship:*

- Replace older light bulbs with more efficient Energy Star compact fluorescent ones.
- Walk, bike, skate, or take public transportation to your place of worship.
- If your place of worship is accessible by public transportation, learn the route and make sure bus and subway schedules are readily available for visitors.
- Host a viewing of the EDN Religious Response to Climate Change web-cast that will be available for download at [www.earthday.net](http://www.earthday.net), after April 21, 2006.

### *In your home:*

- Replace older light bulbs with more efficient Energy Star compact fluorescent ones. If every household in the U.S. replaced a burned-out bulb with an energy efficient bulb it would prevent more than 13 billion pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> from entering the atmosphere.
- Drive less. Every year, Americans as a whole drive more miles than they did the year before. Help stop this trend! Telecommuting, taking public transportation, and carpooling are great alternatives. Walking, biking, and skating are even better and offer health benefits for you too!
- When replacing an older refrigerator or other large appliances such as washers and dryers, make sure they have an Energy Star logo. Energy efficient refrigerators save money in the long run are as much as 50 percent more efficient.

For more information about Earth Day Network's Climate Change Solutions Campaign go to [www.earthday.net](http://www.earthday.net).

## FAITH-BASED ACTION ON GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE *SAMPLE OP-ED*



Concern for the web of life that sustains us lies at the heart of a religious life. People of faith are called to respect and protect it. Like any good stewards, they believe making responsible choices now will help ensure a healthy future.

Global warming is one of the two or three biggest threats facing humanity today. We don't know everything about it. But we have enough scientific evidence to understand that by refusing to take effective action we threaten human health, world ecosystems, and our very survival. We know clearly that we can successfully attack global warming only through collaboration among all nations. If we wait to address the problem it could be too late.

This is an important moral challenge. And it is obvious that the world's poorest people will suffer the most. These are people who cannot afford to combat flooding, drought, hunger, and disease the way wealthier countries can. They will continue to suffer if we do not take action. Before long we will suffer, too.

The Kyoto Protocol treaty to address global warming went into effect a year ago, opening a new frontier in international cooperation. This international treaty has been ratified by 160 countries, but not by the United States. Those countries have taken leadership of the world effort to cut global warming emissions. If the U.S. does ratify the treaty we, like them, will be required to reduce emissions. But people of faith don't need mandates to do the right thing.

Congregations are working to reduce pollution through energy audits and energy efficient lighting and appliances. They are supporting clean energy development and education about energy efficiency. Between February 2004 and February 2005, church congregations in California took steps to help keep 4.6 million pounds of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere. It was the equivalent of taking nearly 460 cars off the road for a year or planting more than 625 acres of trees. In addition, some religious leaders supported landmark California legislation to reduce car pollution, enacted and signed into law in 2002. It will lower global warming emissions and help maintain clean air for everyone. But the legislation is still being challenged by car makers.

Despite some encouraging progress at the state level, responsible federal legislation is necessary to fully address the problem of global warming. Across the country, members of the religious community are taking action and answering the call for stewardship of our planet and our health. They appreciate the decision of many nations to sign the Kyoto Protocol and of some U.S. states to adopt responsible policies. As the world's biggest contributor to global warming emissions, the United States should take similar action.

People of faith must answer the call to stewardship of the environment for the sake of all who live on this earth. We can be part of the solution or we can deny that a problem exists and risk our children's future. Practical solutions are available and we need to start putting them in place. It would be immoral not to do so.



## Religious Student Group Earth Day Planning Guide

*A how-to-guide for campus event planning*

Campus organizations have one of the most valuable resources for promoting change: *students who are motivated and informed!* There are many ways that your campus group can be involved with Earth Day (ED) events this year. The following checklist will give you some ideas that may work for you:

✓ **Educate students on campus about Earth Day Network's Climate Change Solutions Campaign:**



- Hold discussions and creative events on climate change and inform students about the importance of energy conservation
- Insert a blurb in the university newspapers about ED, related events and what each person can do individually
- Organize a viewing of the EDN Educator's Network Live Chat on Climate Change live on Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup> or download it thereafter.

✓ **Create awareness among your peers & partner with surrounding universities:**



- Replace light bulbs in dorms and meeting places with new efficient Energy Star compact fluorescents.
- Use Earth Day as a time to learn more about Energy Action's Campus Climate Challenge. More details can be found at <http://www.energyaction.net>.
- Find out what other campuses are doing for Earth Day at [www.earthday.net](http://www.earthday.net).

✓ **Contact the media and local partners:**



- Join other affiliated programs that are within your city or state in planning events for the broader community
- Write an op-ed for the local newspapers
- Invite press to ED campus events to create public awareness and demonstrate the commitment of students to social change

To have your events registered with Earth Day Network, please visit [www.earthday.net](http://www.earthday.net) and click on "Get Involved." Follow the instructions on the page for registering your organization and activities with EDN.

Contact: [edn-us@earthday.net](mailto:edn-us@earthday.net), subject line: Campus Organizing, or (202) 518-0044.

## DISCOVERING OUR CALL TO CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION



Earth Day 2006, and the months leading up to it, provides an excellent opportunity for your congregation to become part of the solution. Invite members of your congregation to reflect on their relationship to our environment and commit to restoring and preserving the Earth.

### Building Communities through Faith

How does your congregation, faith-based group, or institution express its belief in God and the good of creation on Earth Day? How can it happen not only for the month of April, but all year round? How can your church temple, synagogue, mosque, or other place of worship become a steward of creation? What can be done in your preaching, teaching and worship celebrations during Earth Month? Can you form a special team or committee to plan an Earth Day 2006 observance of some kind within your congregation?

The realization soon comes that this mission of “Caring for Creation” requires ongoing stewardship and leadership. Traditionally, organizations of faith are looked at to provide leadership and guidance in their communities. Taking the lead on an environmental project is a great way to give something back and to help build your community.

Establishment of a project or activity involves believing in what you’re doing, spreading the word, building the capacity to make it happen and even developing this area of mission into an ongoing ministry leading to effective service and action. Leaders need support, resources, planning skills, and training or leadership formation. Because of new distance learning and electronic communication technologies, the local congregation now has substantial opportunities to develop their own ongoing projects and ministry.

This guide is a first step in getting started. Please use it to make a difference and let us know what you’re planning by registering your activity on the EDN website or by filling out the attached Earth Day 2006 Event Registration Form.

# Earth Day 2006 Event Registration Form



*Please directly register your organization and events online at [www.earthday.net](http://www.earthday.net).  
If you are unable to complete the forms online, fax or email them to Earth Day Network.*

Email to [edn-us@earthday.net](mailto:edn-us@earthday.net) with Subject line: Religious Outreach.

Fax to (202)518-8794 with Attention: Religion Outreach.

## ***Organizational Information***

Organization Name (Place of worship, school group, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Interested in joining the EDN U.S. list serve? \_\_\_\_\_ (Y/N)

## ***Event Information***

Name of Event/s: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of event/s:

If more than one event, how many? \_\_\_\_\_

Start Date \_\_\_\_\_ End Date \_\_\_\_\_

Start Time \_\_\_\_\_ End Time \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Event Location (if different from organization address):***

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected number of participants: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you doing any media outreach? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteers needed? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Is the theme of your event climate change related? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

## **EARTH DAY AND GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE LINKS FOR COMMUNITIES OF FAITH**

### **Earth Day Network (EDN)**

Learn more about climate change solutions! Register your event with Earth Day and receive resources and support for your activities.

<http://www.earthday.net>

### **Interfaith Power and Light (IPL)**

The Interfaith Power and Light (IPL) program is working nationally to mobilize religious communities to promote renewable energy, energy efficiency and conservation.

IPL is working to establish Interfaith Power and Light programs in every state. Interfaith dialogues on Climate Change Solutions will take place in communities across the country this Earth Day. To find an IPL program in your state, go to:

<http://www.theregenerationproject.org/ipl/index.html>

### **Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL)**

The Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) identifies ways individuals, schools and synagogues can address global warming. Under the “Celebrate” section there are links to The Earth Day/Passover connection and Why Earth Day is a Jewish Holiday. A How-To Manual for Greening Local Synagogues, Schools and Offices is included as well as Action Alerts. [http://www.coejl.org/action/ss\\_globalw.php](http://www.coejl.org/action/ss_globalw.php)

### **Jewish Vegetarians of North America (JVNA)**

Jewish Vegetarians of North America (JVNA) focuses on reasons why vegetarianism is part of Jewish teachings [www.jewishveg.com](http://www.jewishveg.com). There are links on the impact of industrial agriculture on the planet and its connection to global warming at:

<http://www.google.com/u/JewishVeg?q=climate+change+and+industrial+agriculture&sa=Search>

### **National Council of Churches of Christ – Earth Day Sunday Page**

Each year the National Council of Churches' Eco-Justice Working Group focuses on a particular environmental theme and highlights a number of ways individuals and congregations can celebrate and protect God's creation.

<http://www.ncccecojustice.org/Earth%20Day%20Index2.htm>

### **National Religious Partnership for the Environment (NRPE)**

National Religious Partnership for the Environment (NRPE) is an alliance of independent faith groups including the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Council of Churches U.S.A., the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, and the Evangelical Environmental Network. These organizations have come together drawing on both common biblical beliefs and their own traditions to offer religious resources for the protection of the Earth. <http://www.nrpe.org/>

### **Interfaith Climate Change Network**

A resource for communities of faith interested in global climate change with climate change statements, resources and links.

<http://protectingcreation.org/>

## *Earth Day and Global Climate Change Links for Communities of Faith – Continued*

### **Climate Crisis Coalition Interfaith Initiative**

The Climate Crisis Coalition is working with faith communities to broaden the circle of individuals, organizations and constituencies engaged in the global warming issue. Read the CCC Interfaith Call to Action at: <http://www.climatecrisiscoalition.org/mayer-call-to-action.html> and find out about their broader campaign at <http://www.climatecrisiscoalition.org/>.

### **Interfaith Works (IW)**

Interfaith Works is a non-profit organization that partners with religious organizations to do good works by integrating environmental stewardship with community outreach. IW works with congregations to help connect their faith, their community and the environment. <http://www.interfaithworks.org/>

### **Evangelical Environment Network**

Evangelical Environment Network page on climate change/global warming provides a briefing for religious leaders identifying climate change as a Christian challenge, as well as fact sheets on environmental issues. <http://www.creationcare.org/resources/climate/>

### **Unitarian Universalist Ministry for the Earth**

Resource for Unitarian Universalists on environmental issues, particularly global warming. This page has extensive resources on becoming a green sanctuary. <http://uuministryforearth.org/index.shtml>

### **The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)**

The USCCB is an assembly of the Catholic Church hierarchy who work together to unify, coordinate, promote, and carry on Catholic activities in the United States. To read their statement on global climate change of the go to: <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/globalclimate.htm#introduction>.

### **Buddhist Peace Fellowship (BPF)**

Buddhist Peace Fellowship's open-hearted engagement with the world is expressed through expanding programs in the United States and Asia. Through BPF, Buddhists of many different traditions are developing individual and group responses to socially conditioned suffering. [www.bpf.org](http://www.bpf.org)

### **Quaker Earthcare Witness**

Quaker Earthcare Witness is a spiritually-centered movement of Quakers and like-minded people seeking ways to integrate concern for the environment with Friends' long-standing testimonies for simplicity, peace, and equality. <http://www.quakerearthcare.org>

### **Indigenous Environmental Network**

The Indigenous Environmental Network is a network of Indigenous Peoples empowering Indigenous Nations and communities towards sustainable livelihoods, demanding environmental justice and maintaining the Sacred Fire of their traditions. <http://www.ienearth.org/>

## SCIENTIFIC & POLITICAL RESOURCES ON GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

### **Pew Center on Global Climate Change**

A think tank for climate change research with good basic information on global climate change and policy updates on global warming.

<http://www.pewclimate.org/>



### **Stop Global Warming**

An online campaign to educate people about the effects of global warming and mobilize community members to take action.

<http://www.stopglobalwarming.org/default.asp>

### **Greenpeace International**

Detailed information on cost savings of electricity through usage of energy saving devices.

<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/campaigns/climate-change>

### **Climate Ark-Climate Change**

Domestic and international links to sites dealing with aspects of climate change through policy and programs.

<http://www.climateark.org/links/Advocacy/>

### **Climate Solutions**

A site geared for the Northwest, with a solutions section which is applicable no matter where you live.

<http://www.climatesolutions.org/>

### **Energy Star**

Energy Star is a federally managed program that offers rating systems which businesses can utilize, while educating individuals and businesses about preserving the environment through efficient energy usage.

[http://energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=about.ab\\_index](http://energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=about.ab_index)

Energy Star page for congregations on using energy efficiently and links of interest.

[http://energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=small\\_business.sb\\_congregations](http://energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=small_business.sb_congregations)