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# Faith on Earth



## Welcome

Thank you for participating in our first annual Faith on Earth Weekend! Join Faith in Place this year in bringing Earth Day into the spotlight in houses of worship across Illinois. By now it is clear that climate change needs our attention year-round – one annual holiday just doesn't cut it. But Earth Day *is* a perfect time to bring the issues of our planet front and center in our worship, to join the voices of many faiths in sending a message of urgency and unity of purpose to our legislators, and to make personal and congregational environmental commitments for the coming year.

Faith in Place has gathered tools you can use to plan a meaningful, thought-provoking, and action-packed worship service for the occasion. We have included planning materials for ordained and lay leaders, as well as information about the environmental policies currently in the balance in the political arena and how your faith community can help them succeed. Enclosed you will find:

### For clergy:

- A booklet of preaching resources containing
  - Christian lectionary readings for Sunday, April 16, 2009 and Sunday, April 26, 2009
  - Rev. Clare Butterfield's reflections on the connections between the scriptural readings of these days and the message of Earth Day
  - Reflections by Rabbi Herbert Bronstein on Judaism and environmentalism
- "God's Green Earth: Creation, Faith, Crisis," an environmentally-themed issue of Yale Divinity School's magazine *Reflections*
- Information on the new book *Love God, Heal Earth*, by the Rev. Canon Sally G. Bingham, featuring the work of Faith in Place's own Rev. Clare Butterfield

### For worship planners, Green Team members, and other lay leaders:

- A booklet of worship resources including songs, poems, prayers and litanies from Christian, Jewish, Muslim and other traditions
- A booklet of advocacy resources explaining the key environmental proposal of a cap and trade system in Illinois, and what your faith community can do to make it become a reality
- **Postcards**, to be signed, collected, and returned to Faith in Place

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# Faith on Earth

## Preaching Resources

*For Ordained Leaders and Clergy*



These preaching resources are designed to provide both information and inspiration for your Faith on Earth worship. The articles and commentaries we are providing are meant to address questions, provoke reflection, and facilitate your preparations for preaching on Earth Weekend.

Included in this booklet are reflections by Rabbi Herbert Bronstein on Judaism and the environment, the Christian lectionary readings for Sunday, April 16, 2009 and Sunday, April 26, 2009, and Rev. Clare Butterfield's reflections on the connections between these scriptural readings and the message of Earth Day. In addition, the book *Love God, Heal Earth* and the *Reflections* magazine, themed *God's Green Earth; Creation, Faith, Crisis*, both contain valuable insight by scholars from diverse faith traditions.



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## *Judaic Perspective on the Environment*

By Rabbi Herbert Bronstein

Rabbi Emeritus and Senior Scholar of North Shore Congregations Israel and Professor of Comparative Religion at Lake Forest College

Care for the preservation of the earth in covenant-partnership with God has been a divine imperative in Judaism from its scriptural foundation through various historic expressions of Jewish religious commitment and into our own time.

In Scripture, especially Psalms, and throughout Jewish liturgy and homily, the wonder and awesomeness of nature, God's continuous creating, experienced everyday, is seen as a constant revelation of the Divine.

As we are created in the image of God, so according to rabbinic conceptualization of the Covenant (*B'rit*) with God, we are to be "partners with God in the work of creation," in *Tikkun Olam*, the preservation, repair, maintenance and even gradual perfecting of God's created world.

The sustenance of the earth and all of its creatures is all the more important in Judaism, because in addition to views of the after-life held by Jews, the very basis of *Torah* (scriptural) authoritative Jewish teaching is a good life in this world for all of God's creatures.

Indeed in Judaic teachings, concern for the world of nature goes hand-in-hand with compassionate justice for the marginal, the poor, the exploited and oppressed of the peoples of the earth since environmental degradation and poverty are, in every-day practical reality, bound up with one another. While toxicity in the environment affects us all, it is the poor who suffer most in terms of disease and mortality arising from toxification of water, air, and soil. The destitute themselves are forced into acts of environmental degradation out of the dire need to stay alive.

The Ten Commandments, revealed as the core of the Sinai-Covenant, flows from the first injunction: "I am the Lord Your God you shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:1-3). The worship of the "Golden Calf," in direct contradiction to the Teaching of God (*Torah*) has become universally understood as an expression of all idolatry, but particularly the worship of material gain, that is to say, selfish greed. The worship of material profit has been a core cause of environmental degradation of "the good earth," sacred as God's creation, which God has given us to care for and respect.

Judaism has expressed these religious perceptions both in its archetypal narratives of Creation, Revelation (Sinai) and Redemption (Exodus) as well as in the parables and aphorism of our sages from ancient to modern. An ancient rabbinic homily (*Ecclesiastes Rabbah*) has it: "God says to Adam (humankind): 'Before I made this world, I created many others. This one is very good. I am putting it in your hands. Take good care of it, because, if you mar it, there is no one to fix it after you...and besides you will be responsible for the loss of myriads of my creatures.'"

"How marvelous are your works oh God, in wisdom you have made them all (Psalms 104:24)." This thought is recited daily in statutory Jewish morning worship. As never before, Isaiah's proclamation speaks to us: "Not for chaos did God create the world; for habitation God formed it. (Isaiah 45:18)!"

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## *Revised Common Lectionary readings for Sunday, April 19, 2009*

### *The Second Sunday of Easter*

#### *Acts 4:32-35*

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Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common.<sup>32</sup> With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.<sup>33</sup> There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold.<sup>34</sup> They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.<sup>35</sup>

#### *Psalm 133*

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<sup>1</sup> How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!

<sup>2</sup> It is like the precious oil on the head, running down upon the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down over the collar of his robes.

<sup>3</sup> It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion. For there the LORD ordained his blessing, life forevermore.

#### *1 John 1:1-2:2*

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We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—<sup>1</sup> this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us—<sup>2</sup> we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.<sup>3</sup> We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.<sup>4</sup>

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all.<sup>5</sup> If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true;<sup>6</sup> but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.<sup>7</sup> If we say

that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.<sup>8</sup> If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive

us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.<sup>9</sup> If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.<sup>10</sup>

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;<sup>1</sup> and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.<sup>2</sup>

### ***John 20:19-31***

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When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."<sup>19</sup> After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.<sup>20</sup> Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."<sup>21</sup> When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.<sup>22</sup> If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."<sup>23</sup>

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.<sup>24</sup> So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."<sup>25</sup> A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."<sup>26</sup> Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe."<sup>27</sup> Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"<sup>28</sup> Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."<sup>29</sup>

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book.<sup>30</sup> But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.<sup>31</sup>

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## *Commentary on April 19 Readings*

*by Rev. Dr. Clare Butterfield*

*Executive Director, Faith in Place*

In the Easter season, what better way to show our gratitude for the gifts of life but to devote a worship service to their remembrance? In this time of renewal and return to life, we can rededicate ourselves as faithful citizens to the preservation and good keeping of the Earth.

The lectionary readings for this Sunday closest to Earth Day (April 22) are well adapted to such a focus, if we enter into the service in a spirit of relationship. There is the startling reflection from the Acts of the Apostles that when they had seen the risen Christ they sold all that they had, and shared the proceeds among themselves so that everyone had what they needed. What a brave undertaking – to liquidate everything and assume that all needs would be met.

It is worth reflecting that much of our economic activity in the United States is driven by consumer spending. When that spending stops, so does our economy. How much of that getting and discarding is really based in fear? If we built a stronger social network, in which people could be assured that they would not have to endure an impoverished old age, and in which they could be assured that their medical care needs would be met, would they still feel that they had to acquire so many possessions, at such cost to the Earth? What allowed the Apostles to discard everything, if not the richness of their lives together? This is a good passage to help people see the connections between ecological damage and our economic mood – to see the true costs of our economic behavior.

All the goods we consume come at a cost to the Earth. They are frequently manufactured in other countries (China is the source of a great proportion of our consumer goods – 40% in 2006), where the safety and environmental restrictions are much lower than they are here. Those goods come at huge cost to the environments of the places where they are made – and at huge cost to the lives and health of the people who make them. The fact that the damage is done at great remove from the comfort of our lives and homes does not mean that we shouldn't take responsibility for it. But such damage is the inevitable cost of measuring the value of our lives in money and goods, rather than measuring it by the blessings of life and community.

Psalm 133 echoes this exact theme, in the way in which it compares the life of community with the material gifts of wealth. "How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity! It is like the precious oil on the head...." Blessing comes from our life together. Only our fear leads us to hoard material wealth as a sign of blessing. Security comes from community, not from wealth.

The readings from John both speak to the theme of believing without having seen. In an ecological vein, one can take this idea in obvious and not-so-obvious directions. Since everyone will think of it anyway, it's probably worth talking about what kind of

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evidence people need in order to believe in something really big – like global warming – which is outside their ordinary experience.

Doubting Thomas stated the standard of evidence he required in order to believe that Jesus had returned from the dead, and, unusually enough, he was able to have his standard met. Most of us do not get to set our own standards for proof in this life. There are things we simply must accept on the basis of the best available evidence. Global warming must be among these, because the point at which the evidence becomes irrefutable is past the point of reversal. The trouble we have with a phenomenon like global warming is that even the most skilled of scientists who focus the bulk of their scientific endeavor on the topic will not know whether we've crossed the point of no return until well after we have done so. Their models are only estimates that indicate that the consequences of continuing to act as we have in the past are dire indeed.

This is a case where we may prefer to be doubting Thomases, because it is more convenient to continue to deny the damage we have done until it is beyond denial. But at that point it is also beyond repair. We are going to have to accept general indications and a strong uniformity of scientific opinion which already exists, and has existed for some time. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, appointed by the UN but staffed by over 350 climate scientists from around the world, issued its opinion in 2007 without dissent that there is no longer any doubt that the world climate is changing as a result of human causes. That panel shared the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize with Al Gore for their work, and their most recent assessment indicates that the changes predicted by climate change models are accelerating more rapidly than even the most pessimistic models predicted. But they are not different in kind from the predictions – what is happening is what was expected to happen if the models were correct.

Many of the scientists from this panel are calling for an emergency meeting on Climate Change in Copenhagen (which is, at time of writing this reflection, anticipated for March 2009) to drive home the point that climate change is already accelerating beyond predictions even from the 2007 IPCC report. Predictions for the rise in sea level (which were limited to 40cm in the 2007 report) are now suggesting that at least a one meter rise is already locked in because of the greenhouse gases already present in the environment. Catastrophic increases could cause melting of land-based ice in the Greenland and in the Antarctic, which would mean sea level rises on the order of 5 meters.

Scientists who believed that we could limit the damage we've already done to a 2 degree celcius increase in average global temperature now believe that 4 degrees is more likely – and that the countries of the world must respond in a more serious way to this situation in the negotiations round that will meet in Copenhagen at the end of this year if we are to avoid the “runaway scenarios” that bring us to a 10 degree or more increase.

The difference between a 4 degree scenario and a 10 degree scenario may well be the difference between a planet that comfortably supports a human population (albeit with less stable agriculture and more extreme weather) and one that does not (because it is simply no longer possible to feed ourselves or to provide drinking water to more than a tiny percentage of us). This is no small matter.

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I think that a less-obvious question for the doubting Thomas story is that of the cost or the benefit of belief. And in the case of the gospel story, perhaps we should be asking about the cost of believing for Thomas himself, rather than for the rest of us. If Thomas believed that Jesus had returned from the dead then he would be forced to accept that the world was radically different from what he perceived it to be. Perhaps this is why he couldn't believe it until he could see it. This radical change in the world was more frightening and less clearly good for Thomas than it might be for us. This was all new to him – it must have seemed very dangerous. How much safer if he could just say he didn't know until the proof was right in front of him.

Those who still doubt the existence of climate change, or who acknowledge it but doubt our ability to reverse it may be in much the same position. To know this – to acknowledge the truth of it – brings clear disadvantages. It feels safer to say we don't know.

While there is no longer any real debate within the scientific community that global warming exists or that it is caused by human activity, such debate may continue in the larger community simply because there is no perceived benefit to believing. Once we acknowledge that our behavior is severely and negatively influencing life on Earth, we will have to ask questions about what kind of people we say we are – and how such people would behave in these circumstances.

But the benefit of accepting the truth is that it will afford us the opportunity to become the people we say we want to be. We could yet choose to become the kinds of people who pay attention to the impacts their lives are having on those around them – the kind that are mindful and loving in all that they do. These changes might even change the outcome for our lovely little planet. There is no guarantee that they will, but the only possibility of changing the outcome will be through such changes. But even if they don't change the result, they will change *us*. We might do them for the same reason that we pray – to conform ourselves to the will of God – not to conform God to our will.

The benefit of belief in the risen Christ is freedom from fear. It is liberation to be a saved people – to be the body of the church. Such liberation comes with obligations – it is a complex gift.

The benefit of believing in global warming could be seen as very similar. Acknowledging the truth of our situation even before we see it with our own eyes and touch it with our own hands could be the very thing that frees us to become truly loving human beings who live lives of true communion with the life around us.

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*Lectionary Readings for Sunday, April 26, 2009*  
*The Third Sunday of Easter*

*Isaiah 52:7-10*

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How beautiful upon the mountains  
Are the feet of the messenger who announces peace,  
Who brings good news,  
Who announces salvation,  
Who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."<sup>7</sup>  
Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices,  
Together they sing for joy;  
For in plain sight they see  
The return of the Lord to Zion.<sup>8</sup>  
Break forth together into singing,  
You ruins of Jerusalem;  
For the Lord has comforted his people,  
He has redeemed Jerusalem.<sup>9</sup>  
The Lord has bared his holy arm  
Before the eyes of all the nations;  
And all the ends of the earth shall see  
The salvation of God.<sup>10</sup>

*Psalms 57:9*

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I will give thanks to you, O Lord,  
Among the peoples;  
I will sing praises to you among the nations.

*2 Timothy 4:6-11, 18*

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As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come.<sup>6</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.<sup>7</sup> From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing.<sup>8</sup>

Do your best to come to me soon,<sup>9</sup> for Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.<sup>10</sup>

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Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful in my ministry.<sup>11</sup>

The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.<sup>18</sup>

### *Mark 1:1-15*

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The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ the Son of God.<sup>1</sup>

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See I am sending my messenger ahead of you,

Who will prepare your way;<sup>2</sup>

the voice of one crying out in the wilderness;

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,

Make his paths straight.’<sup>3</sup>

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.<sup>4</sup> And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.<sup>5</sup> Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.<sup>6</sup> He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals.<sup>7</sup> I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”<sup>8</sup> In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.<sup>9</sup> And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him.<sup>10</sup> And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”<sup>11</sup> And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.<sup>12</sup> He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.<sup>13</sup> Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God,<sup>14</sup> and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”<sup>15</sup>

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## *Commentary on April 26 Readings*

*by Rev. Dr. Clare Butterfield*

*Executive Director, Faith in Place*

Those of you who choose to celebrate your Faith on Earth Sunday on April 26 instead of April 19 will find that the lectionary readings are a bit more of a struggle. But in this set of readings too there is food for thought about our relationship to the Earth around us.

So much of what is said about the good works of God is said in a context of nature. Even the messenger who brings peace, in that beautiful passage from Isaiah, is described through the beauty of his feet on the mountain – a human in nature. And it is from the Earth that God’s salvation shall be seen. In the Hebrew scriptures there is no longing for a world justified, apart from this world. It is here that God’s plan is enacted, and here that the human destiny will be worked out. And when God is celebrated and praised, as he is in the Psalm, he is praised not only from our mouths, but from the mouth of all creation.

The other reading that has the most meat in it for these purposes is the passage from Mark, which shows some of our strained relationship to Wilderness. Wilderness is sometimes the place from which the beauty of God’s creation is celebrated. But sometimes it is the place where human beings have to go to struggle with temptation, and to be cut off from a feeling of being held by God.

The ambiguity of wilderness and our relationship to it is so clear in this passage from Mark, where it is through the wilderness that the coming of Jesus is foretold, by a messenger (who nevertheless has to make the paths straight – he can’t leave them in the wild tangle that he found them).

But John the Baptist comes as a product of the wilderness – as one who is himself more than a little wild. He comes from the countryside, he baptizes not in the civilized font of a gathering place, but in the river Jordan. And in the wild river Jordan they are made clean and new, ready for the entry of the Holy Spirit.

John himself is one of those prophets of the old school – a hairy man, clothed in camel’s hair and eating locusts and wild honey. This man was a camper. Ready to make a wrap out of whatever was to hand, and ready to survive on bugs or whatever presented itself.

He is of the earth, John. And this is whom God chooses to prepare the way for God’s descent to Earth.

It seems to me that it’s only truthful to point out in a sermon that wilderness is a troubled concept, both in Hebrew Scripture and in the New Testament. But the fact that people keep going there to work out their destiny with Satan, or to decide whether they will choose power over love, is very apt for us in our time. We have a big decision to

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make, and we will make it in the wilderness whether we can see that or not. Our lives are supported by the air that we breathe, the soil that produces our food, the water we drink. We are as dependent on wilderness as we ever were, even though many of us live in cities where the wilderness is difficult to see.

We still can be tempted, and must spend the time in discernment about which sort of people we will be – the ones who open up our hearts to admit the light of God, or the ones who close it out in favor of narrow self-interest.

These are wilderness moments, and the health of the Earth now hinges on them, in a way that it did not in Jesus' time.

So if your calendar requires you to defer to this weekend, instead of the weekend of April 19, you will still find some grist for the religious/ecological mill in these lectionary readings.



Whichever weekend you choose as your Faith on Earth Sunday, we'd be grateful if you'd share a copy of your sermon with us after the fact. Just email it to [clare@faithinplace.org](mailto:clare@faithinplace.org). If you would be open to having it up on our website, please indicate that. We're in the process of rebuilding it to include more resources. And thank you!



***Our Mission:*** There are two great responsibilities common to all faiths: to love one another and to care for the creation that sustains all life. Faith in Place gives religious people tools to reflect deeply on these responsibilities, integrate the teachings of faith into practice, and work together for a just and sustainable future.

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# Faith on Earth

## Worship Resources

*For Worship Planners, Green Team members, and other lay leaders*



The Faith on Earth worship resources are designed to help us give thanks for creation, but also to reflect on the havoc that our actions are wreaking on it and on our call to care for it. Faith in Place encourages you to use these worship tools to spur your faith into action.

The following prayers, poems, songs, and reflections were chosen from a variety of faith traditions. For more extensive worship materials specific to your religion or denomination, we have included a list of online resources in this booklet.



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# Web Resources

There are *many* online resources that have been compiled by different faith groups. The websites below can also provide you with an abundance of inspiration and ideas.

Web of Creation has year-round resources for incorporating creation into worship. They also have links to several different Earth Day services, and a list of environmentally themed hymns from several different hymnals.

<http://www.webofcreation.org/Worship/services/earthday.htm>

<http://www.webofcreation.org/Worship/liturgy/hymns.htm>

Earth Ministries, our Interfaith Power & Light partner in Washington State, has many wonderful resources on their site, including hymns, litanies, and sample services.

<http://www.earthministry.org/resources/worship-aids>

The Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) has essays on Judaism and Earth Day, as well as resources on how to have an “Environmental Shabbat.”

<http://www.coejl.org/~coejlor/celebrate/index.php>

<http://www.coejl.org/~coejlor/celebrate/shabbat.php>

The Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences website provides engaging tutorials and “The Muslim Green Guide to Reducing Climate Change,” explains the connections between Islamic teachings and environmental stewardship.

[http://ifees.org.uk/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=75&Itemid=99](http://ifees.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=75&Itemid=99)

[http://www.ifees.org.uk/Muslim Green Guide Print Final V3.pdf](http://www.ifees.org.uk/Muslim%20Green%20Guide%20Print%20Final%20V3.pdf)

The folks at the African American Lectionary have put together a tremendous amount of material for planning your worship. On the calendar page, scroll down to Earth Day Sunday. 2008’s materials are accessible in their archives.

2008: <http://www.theafricanamericanlectionary.org/calendar2008.asp>

2009: <http://www.theafricanamericanlectionary.org/calendar.asp>

The National Council of Churches of Christ has ten years’ worth of Eco-Justice themed Earth Day resources posted online.

<http://www.nccecojustice.org/EarthDay/index.html>



## Songs and Hymns

*He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands*, Spiritual

*Morning Has Broken*, Eleanor Farjeon

*All Things Bright and Beautiful*, Cecil Alexander

*All Creatures of Our God and King*, Francis of Assisi

*How Great Thou Art*, Stuart K. Hine

*For the Beauty of the Earth*, Folliott S. Pierpoint

*This is My Father’s World*, by Maltbie D. Babcock

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## *Jewish Prayer*

*from God to Adam and Eve, a midrash*

“And God saw everything that He had made, and found it very good.”

And He said: This is a beautiful world that I have given you.

Take good care of it, do not ruin it.

It is said: Before the world was created, the Holy One kept creating worlds and destroying them. Finally He created this one, and was satisfied. He said to Adam: This is the last world I shall make. I place it in your hands: hold it in trust.

## *A Call to Prayer*

*by Hildegard of Bingen, a 12<sup>th</sup> century German abbess, author, naturalist, and general source of inspiration*

The earth is at the same time  
mother,

She is mother of all that is natural, mother of all that is human.

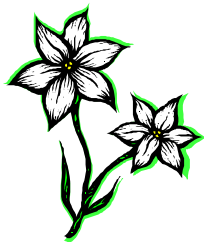
She is the mother of all,  
for contained in her  
are the seeds of all.

The earth of humankind contains all moistness, all verdancy, all germinating power.

It is in so many ways  
fruitful.

All creation comes from it.

Yet it forms not only the basic raw material for humankind,  
but also the substance  
of the incarnation  
of God's son.



*Members of the Baha'i faith believe that God has sent Messengers throughout history, including Buddha, Abraham, Jesus, and Muhammad. Bahá'u'lláh was the most recent of these messengers.*

## *Baha'i Prayer*

*by Bahá'u'lláh*

Blessed is the spot, and the house,  
and the place, and the city,  
and the heart, and the mountain,  
and the refuge, and the cave,  
and the valley, and the land,  
and the sea, and the island,  
and the meadow where mention  
of God hath been made,  
and His praise glorified.

## *Tips for your Faith on Earth Worship*

- ❖ Move your worship outside! There is no better place to praise creation than in the midst of it.
- ❖ If you can't be in nature, evoke it in your worship space with banners and plant arrangements. If you usually use cut flowers in your space, try using dried grasses and flowering branches instead. Better yet, replace your arrangements with potted plants that will continue to grow and flourish.
- ❖ If you take up an offering during worship, dedicate part or all of the collections to your faith community's green ministry, to Faith in Place, or to another environmental organization of your choice.
- ❖ Choose this week to focus on your faith community's consumption. Awareness of water and energy use is the first step towards reducing it.
- ❖ Dedicate a time in your worship to conspicuously celebrate the green successes that you have already achieved, and to advertise any plans you have for the future. For example, you might:
  - ~ Plan a community gardening day on your grounds,
  - ~ Promote a "Bike to Worship" month in May, or
  - ~ Choose Earth Weekend to measure your house of worship's carbon footprint (go to [www.CoolCongregations.com](http://www.CoolCongregations.com)) and pledge to reduce it.



## *Spirit of Love*

*A poem by Barbara Deming*

Spirit of love  
That flows against our flesh  
Sets it trembling  
Moves across it as across grass  
Erasing every boundary that we  
accept  
And swings the doors of our lives  
wide—  
This is a prayer that I sing:  
Save our perishing earth!

Spirit that cracks our  
Single selves—  
Eyes fall down eyes,  
Hearts escape through the bars  
of  
our ribs  
To dart into other bodies—  
Save this earth!  
The earth is perishing.  
This is a prayer I sing.

Spirit that hears each one of us,  
Hears all that is—  
Listens, listens, hears us out—  
Inspire us now!  
Our own pulse beats in every  
stranger's throat,  
And also there within the flowered  
ground beneath  
our feet,  
And—teach us to listen!—  
We can hear it in water, in wood,  
and even in stone.  
We are the earth of this earth, and we  
are bone of its bone.  
This is a prayer I sing, for we have  
forgotten this  
and so  
The earth is perishing.

*Have fun, and don't forget to be creative!*

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## *Thanksgiving and Confession*

*from the North American Conference on Christianity and Ecology*

For the marvelous grace of Your Creation—  
We pour out our thanks to You, our God,  
    for sun and moon and stars,  
    for rain and dew and winds,  
    for winter cold and summer heat.

We pour forth our praise to You  
    for mountains and hills,  
    for springs and valleys,  
    for rivers and seas.

We praise You, O Lord,  
    for plants growing in earth and water,  
    for life inhabiting lakes and seas,  
    for life creeping in soils and land,  
    for creatures living in wetlands and waters,  
    for life flying above earth and sea,  
    for beasts dwelling in woods and fields.

How many and wonderful are Your works, our God!  
    In wisdom you have made them all!

But we confess, dear Lord,  
    as creatures privileged with the care and keeping of Your Creation  
    that we have abused your Creation gifts  
    through arrogance, ignorance, and greed.

We confess risking permanent damage to Your handiwork;  
    we confess impoverishing Creations' ability to bring you praise.

Yet, we confess that Your handiwork displays Your glory,  
    leaving all of us without excuse  
    but to know You

We confess that Your handiwork  
    provides the context of our living;  
    it is our home,  
    it is the realm in which we live the life of Your kingdom:  
    Your kingdom that is now in our midst and coming yet more fully.

We confess, Lord, that we often are unaware  
    of how our abuse of Creation has also been an abuse of ourselves.

*(Continued on next page)*

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## *Thanksgiving and Confession (continued)*

O Lord, how long will it take before we awaken to what we have done?  
How many waters must we pollute?  
How many woodlots must we destroy?  
How many forests must we despoil?  
How much soil must we erode and poison, O Lord?  
How much of Earth's atmosphere must we contaminate?  
How many species must we abuse and extinguish?  
How many people must we degrade and kill with toxic wastes  
before we learn to love and respect your Creation;  
before we learn to love and respect our home?

For our wrongs, Lord, we ask forgiveness.

In sorrow for what we have done we offer our repentance.  
We pray that our actions toward You and Your Creation are worthy of our repentance;  
that we will so act here on earth that heaven will not be a shock to us.

We promise to reverence Your Creation as a gracious gift  
entrusted to us by You, our God.  
We promise anew to be stewards  
and not pillagers  
of what You have entrusted to us.

Creator God,  
You have given us every reason  
to learn and promote this wisdom of lives lived in harmony with Creation.

May we, your servants, increasingly serve.

May we, your servants, increasingly come to love Your Creation as we increasingly come to  
love You,

through Christ Jesus,  
our Lord.

Amen.



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## *Words from Islam*

The world is green and beautiful and God has appointed you his stewards over it.

~The Prophet Muhammad

Whosoever plants a tree and diligently looks after it until it matures and bears fruit is rewarded.

~The Prophet Muhammad

There is not an animal (that lives) on the earth, nor a being that flies on its wings, but (forms part of) communities like you. Nothing have we omitted from the Book, and they (all) shall be gathered to their Lord in the end.

~Qur'an 6:38

Have you not seen that it is God to whom all the beings in the earth bow themselves down - and so too the sun and the moon and the stars and the mountains and the trees and the beasts?

~Qur'an 22:18

The Messenger of Allah commands you. Do not kill a child, nor a woman, nor an old man, nor obliterate a stream, nor cut a tree.

~Hadith (Ahmad)

Assuredly the creation of the heavens and the earth is a greater (matter) than the creation of men: yet most men understand not.

~Qur'an 40:57



## *Litany: A Prayer of Healing*

from "Only One Earth," a UN Environment Programme publication for "Environmental Sabbath/Earth Rest Day," June 1990

We join with the earth and with each other.

*To bring new life to the land*

*To restore the waters*

*To refresh the air*

We join with the earth and with each other.

*To renew the forests*

*To care for the plants*

*To protect the creatures*

We join with the earth and with each other.

*To celebrate the seas*

*To rejoice in the sunlight*

*To sing the song of the stars*

We join with the earth and with each other.

*To recreate the human community*

*To promote justice and peace*

*To remember our children*

We join with the earth and with each other.

We join together as many and diverse expressions

of one loving mystery: for the healing of the earth and the renewal of all life.

(For the complete Sabbath, visit <http://www.earthministry.org>)

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## Letter to All the People

Attributed to Chief Seattle, leader of the Suquamish & Duwamish Native American Tribes, 1854

The President in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land. But how can you buy or sell the sky, the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air or the spark of the water, then how can you buy them? Every part of this Earth is sacred to my people; every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every meadow, every humming insect. All are holy in the memory and experience of my people. We know the sap that courses through the trees as we know the blood that courses through our veins. We are a part of the Earth, and it is part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters. The bear, the deer, the great eagle: these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the juices in the meadow, the body heat of the pony, and the man all belong to the same family.

The shining water that moves from the streams and rivers is not just water but the blood of our ancestors. If we sell you our land, you must remember that it is sacred. Each ghostly reflection in the lakes tells of memories in the life of my people. The water's murmur is the voice of my father's father. The rivers are our brothers. They quench our thirst. They carry our canoes and feed our children. So you must give to the rivers the kindness you would give to any brother.

If we sell you our land remember that the air is precious to us, that the air shares its spirit with all of the life it supports. The wind that gave our grandfather his first breath also receives his last sigh. The wind also gives our children the spirit of life. So if we sell you our land, you must keep it apart and sacred as a place where men can go and taste the wind that is sweetened by the meadow flowers.

Will you teach your children what we have taught our children: that the Earth is our mother? What befalls the Earth, befalls all the sons of the Earth. This we know: the Earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the Earth. All things are connected like the blood that unites us all. Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand of it. Whatever he does to the Earth, he does to himself.

One thing we know: our God is also your God. The Earth is precious to him, and to harm the Earth is to heap contempt on its creator.

Your destiny is a mystery to us. What will happen when the buffalo are all slaughtered? The wild horses tamed? What will happen when the secret corners of the forest are heavy with the scent of men and the view of the ripe hills is blotted by talking wires? Where will the thicket be? Gone. Where will the eagle be? Gone. And what is it to say good-bye to the swift pony and the hunt? The end of living and the beginning of survival!

When the last red man has vanished and his memory is but the shadow of a cloud moving across the prairie, will these shores and forests still be here? Will there be any of the spirit of my people left?

We love this Earth as a newborn loves its mother's heartbeat. So if we sell you our land, love it as we have loved it. Care for it as we have cared for it. Hold in your memory the land as it is when you receive it. Preserve the land for all children and love it as God loves us all. As we are part of the land, you too are a part of the land. As the Earth is precious to us, so is it precious to you.

One thing we know: there is only one God. No man, be he red man or white man, can be apart. We are brothers after all.

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# Faith on Earth

## Advocacy Resources

*For Worship Planners, Green Team members, and other lay leaders*



Individual lifestyle changes are important for moving towards an environmentally sustainable future, but they aren't a drop in the bucket of what we have to do in order to curb the climate change that is already happening. We need carbon reductions on a scale that only state and federal laws can achieve. Our many faiths call us to address the urgent issue of climate change, and the most effective way to do so is at the policy level. So, while the members of your faith community may not be accustomed to voicing their opinions in the policy arena, now is a good time to start. The voice of the faith community is a powerful one, and we can make a big impact if we speak up.

This year Faith in Place has identified one piece of Illinois environmental legislation that we believe is particularly urgent and relevant to people of faith: a **carbon cap and trade system**. This booklet is designed to help your faith community get informed and active on this issue. Included are more detailed information on Carbon Cap and Trade and instructions on how to carry out Faith in Place's post card campaign in your community.



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## Why This Issue?

There are all kinds of proposals of ways to slow down climate change, many of which, if successful, could help reduce our greenhouse gas emissions significantly. The Illinois Clean Cars Act and Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act are both examples of bills that we should all be supporting in Springfield this year. A carbon cap and trade policy, however, has the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions exponentially more than other projects, and is therefore essential if we are to achieve our goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050 (the amount that scientists have stated we need to achieve in order to avoid the worst effects of climate change). Also, a carbon cap system has the ability to take into account the needs of the communities who will be impacted the most by rising prices. The poor are the people who are most adversely affected by climate change, and we cannot afford to increase their suffering by waiting to act.

*For the creation of a morally just cap and trade program, the voice of the faith community is particularly essential.* As our society struggles with how to confront the urgent issue of climate change, there are ethical questions at the heart of the cap and trade system that must be considered. Our legislators need to know that

- ❖ The program must be based on uncompromised, science-based carbon reduction targets (at least 80% by 2050).
- ❖ It must also rely on input from the communities that will be most affected.
- ❖ All of the pollution credits should be auctioned immediately, and the revenue should be used to help ensure that the rising cost of energy does not fall disproportionately on low-income people.

## How does Carbon Cap and Trade work?

Carbon cap and trade creates a cap on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from large sources like power plants, oil and natural gas distribution centers, and refineries that is gradually reduced over time. Tradable emissions “allowances” are auctioned by the state. Capped sources must submit allowances equivalent to their emissions at the end of each compliance period, and the capped sources choose the best mix of reducing emissions or buying allowances for their situation. Proceeds from the auction are invested in technologies and projects to reduce GHGs, mitigate potential transition costs, and adapt to climate change impacts. As a market-based program, it allows for the most cost-effective emissions reduction options to be implemented. By putting a price on global warming pollution, it encourages investments in new low-carbon technologies.<sup>1</sup>

## Where can I find more information?

- ❖ For more information on cap and trade and other policy issues, look at the Illinois Climate Action Network’s fact sheets: <http://www.illinoisclimateactionnetwork.org/>
- ❖ The Union of Concerned Scientists also explains the issue well: [http://www.ucsusa.org/global\\_warming/solutions/big\\_picture\\_solutions/cap-and-trade.html](http://www.ucsusa.org/global_warming/solutions/big_picture_solutions/cap-and-trade.html)

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<sup>1</sup> Explanation from the Illinois Climate Action Network Cap and Trade Fact Sheet

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# What Can I Do?

A cap and trade bill has been proposed in Springfield. Faith in Place has organized a postcard campaign for the faith community to express its support and stipulate that it should be executed justly. With these postcards, we can raise the voice of the faithful to our state legislators in support of a carbon cap. And believe us, when these postcards start showing up in Springfield by the hundreds, our voice will be heard.

Distribute the postcards and collect signatures however you think will be most effective in your faith community.

Here are some suggestions:

- ❖ Before, during, or after your worship, get up in front of your community and announce the campaign! Show off the postcards and where to get them, briefly explain cap and trade and why it matters to people of faith, and ask people to sign them and return them to you.
- ❖ Use the half-sheet blurb on the back of this page in your bulletin or as a handout to explain the postcard campaign, *or*
- ❖ Simply insert blank cards in each worship bulletin.
- ❖ Set up an information table where people can pick up postcards and learn more.

Please ask folks to sign two postcards -- one for their state Representative and another for their state Senator. **\*Note:** These postcards are intended for *state* – NOT federal – legislators. People can look up their legislators' names at [www.ilga.gov](http://www.ilga.gov) or they can leave the space blank and we'll fill it out. Collect the signed postcards during the offertory, at coffee hour, or whenever makes sense and send them back to:

**Faith in Place**  
**2532 W. Warren Blvd.**  
**Chicago, IL 60612**

## What happens next?

We will try to organize in-district deliveries with you and other leaders in your district. Where that's not possible, we will mail them to Springfield. Illinois legislators all over the state will witness the strong commitment of the faith community to fighting climate change, and we will be one step closer to a sustainable future.

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## *Speaking up for a Carbon Cap*

### Faith in Place's 2009 Postcard Campaign

Join faith communities from around Illinois in raising the voice of the faithful to our **state** legislators. Enclosed are two postcards to sign and address, one to your representative and one to your senator, so that our elected representatives know we support reducing carbon emissions through a carbon cap. At Faith in Place, we believe this is the most critical legislation to pass if we are to effectively curb global warming. You can look up your legislators' names at [www.ilga.gov](http://www.ilga.gov) or leave the space blank and we'll fill it out for you. Turn in your signed postcards today, or return them to Faith in Place, 2532 W. Warren Blvd., Chicago, IL 60622.

For more information about carbon caps, visit [http://img.ilenviro.org/attachments/cap-and-trade\\_fact\\_sheet-1.pdf](http://img.ilenviro.org/attachments/cap-and-trade_fact_sheet-1.pdf) or [www.ucsusa.org/global\\_warming/solutions/big\\_picture\\_solutions/cap-and-trade.html](http://www.ucsusa.org/global_warming/solutions/big_picture_solutions/cap-and-trade.html)

