

Climate Justice Month

March 22 – April 22

Honoring the Four Elements and Celebrating the Earth

Water: Reveling

Fire: Reckoning

Air: Reconnecting

Earth: Committing



The Earth from Space

Compiled for you by members of the Climate Justice Committee, the Environmental Action Council, and Religious Exploration staff, and drawing from resources offered on the UUA website.

Climate Justice Month

From World Water Day to Earth Day (March 22 to April 22, 2015), Unitarian Universalists and other people of faith and conscience will begin a spiritual journey for climate justice organized by Commit2Respond (<http://www.commit2respond.org/>), the new climate justice initiative led by a coalition of Unitarian Universalists and other people of conscience working for climate justice.

Individuals, families, groups, and congregations can draw upon faith-filled resources, engage in special activities during the month, learn together, and consider how we might shift to a low carbon future, advance human rights, and grow the climate justice movement. Learn more about Climate Justice Month here: <http://www.uua.org/environment/climate/climate-justice-month>.

Be inspired, get connected with other people of faith and conscience committed to climate justice, and commit to long-term actions that will help save our world. This is your movement. You have the power to make a difference. How will you respond?

Unitarian Universalists see ourselves as one thread in a single fabric of all existence. We embrace nature's beauty and are in awe of its power. We have a responsibility to care for our home and stand together with those most affected by pollution, environmental destruction, increasingly severe natural disasters, and other impacts of climate change.

Climate Justice Month Timeline

The timeline theme for Climate Justice Month is built around the four elements: water (reveling), fire (reckoning), air (reconnecting), and earth (committing).

March 22: World Water Day and Climate Justice Sunday

Week 1: Reveling in connection with the natural world and its gifts

Week 2: Reckoning with the impacts and injustices of climate change, exploring where our energy comes from

Week 3: Reconnecting with hope through relationship, exploring who is impacted by our energy sources

Week 4: Committing to long-term actions to shift energy, advance human rights, and grow the climate justice movement

April 19: Earth Day worship committing to a healthy future

April 22: Earth Day

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First Week: March 22 is World Water Day and Climate Justice Sunday

Water: Reveling

Reveling in the Natural World Around Us

Water signifies immersion, our connection with the natural world and its gifts, basic human rights, and grief at the potential for loss due to climate change.

Reflections about Water

Water

By Wendell Berry

I was born in a drought year. That summer my mother waited in the house, enclosed in the sun and the dry ceaseless wind, for the men to come back in the evenings, bringing water from a distant spring. Veins of leaves ran dry, roots shrank. And all of my life I have dreaded the return of that year, sure that it still is somewhere, like a dead enemy's soul. Fear of dust is in my mouth is always with me, and I am the faithful husband of the rain, I love the water of wells and springs and the taste of roofs in the water cisterns. I am a dry man whose thirst is praise of clouds, and whose mind is something of a cup.

My sweetness is to wake in the night after days of heat, hearing the rain.

From *Farming: A Handbook* (1970). Reprinted with permission.

Water Flows

Author: Thich Nhat Hahn

Water flows from high in the mountains.
Water runs deep in the Earth.

Miraculously, water comes to us,
and sustains us all.

Water flows over these hands.
May I use them skillfully
to preserve our precious planet.

The Negro Speaks of Rivers

Langston Hughes, 1902 - 1967

I've known rivers:

I've known rivers ancient as the world and
older than the

flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were
young.

I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me
to sleep.

I looked upon the Nile and raised the
pyramids above it.

I heard the singing of the Mississippi when

Abe Lincoln

went down to New Orleans, and I've

seen its muddy

bosom turn all golden in the sunset.

I've known rivers:

Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

This Week: Reveling in Our connections with the Natural World

Sometime this week, visit one of your favorite natural places near water. Take time to think about why you love it and what gifts it has given you that you are grateful for. Write a short paragraph about your experience there and share it on Facebook or via an email or a phone call to another UU.

Actions that Focus Our Attention on the Importance of Water

1. Go outside on a misty or rainy day, close your eyes, and turn your face up to the rain. As the drops fall on your face, meditate for a minute or two on precious life-giving water and how it nourishes the earth.
2. How many streams and creeks around Corvallis, Philomath, and Albany can you name?
3. Commit to never buying bottled water. Research the reasons why this would be a good action.

Second Week

Fire: Reckoning

Reckoning with the Impacts and Injustices of Climate change

Fire signifies transformation, righteous anger and passion, exploring where our energy comes from and reckoning with the impacts and injustices of climate change.

Reflections about Fire and Reckoning

Breathing Space (Fire)

By Judy Brown

What makes a fire burn
is space between the logs,
a breathing space.
Too much of a good thing,
too many logs packed in too tight
can douse the flames
almost as surely
as a pail of water would.
So building fires
requires attention
to the spaces in between,
as much as to the wood.
When we are able to build
open spaces in the same way
we have learned to pile on the logs,
then we can come to see how
it is fuel, and absence of the fuel
together, that make fire possible.
We only need to lay a log
lightly from time to time.
A fire grows
simply because the space is there,
with openings in which the flame
that knows just how it wants to burn
can find its way.

Fossil Fuel

By John Dickson

Dark storms of the afternoon persist
Until what little day there was has gone,
But she still lingers in his eyes
And seldom lets him sleep.
He has grown vulnerable—
A turtle with no shell,
A bird trapped in the cat's hypnotic eye.
Her shadow has left its imprint on the wall.

A scoop of coal revives the fireplace
And melts the chill that harbors in the bone
But soon releases ghosts of mastodons
And fish and flying reptiles
pressed in their carbon matrix since that day
When some upheaval trapped them in their
bog.

He lives his life inert, compressed by time
Growing steady in his orbit
And established in his ways
Until somewhere on this journey
He is making to himself,
She returns to him to set his head afire
And all his million years of words
Escape at last to keep her warm.

This Week: Reckoning with the Impacts and Injustices of Climate Change

If you haven't already, consider reading, *Active Hope*, by Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone. The Fellowship library has at least one copy. UUFC friends who have their own copies might be able to lend you theirs. And you can order your own copy at Grassroots or from Beacon Press.

Actions that Focus Our Attention on What We Can Do about the Climate Crisis

1. Join Commit2Respond if you haven't already: <http://www.commit2respond.org/>
It's inspiring to connect with UUs all over and share resources and ideas.
2. Check the websites of major climate change organizations and learn what effects climate change is having around the world right now and what people are doing about it.
350.org - <http://350.org/>; Climate Progress - <https://www.facebook.com/climateprogress>
Post Carbon Institute - <http://www.postcarbon.org/>
3. Write a letter to your senators and representatives urging action on climate change.

Third Week

Air: Reconnecting

Breathing the Air that Connects Us to the Earth

Air signifies connectedness, mobilization, breath, spirit, exploring who is impacted by our energy sources and reconnecting with hope through relationship.

Reflections about Air and Reconnecting

Blessed Be the Wind

By Lyall Watson

Without wind, most of Earth would be uninhabitable. The tropics would grow so unbearably hot that nothing could live there, and the rest of the planet would freeze. Moisture, if any existed, would be confined to the oceans, and all but the fringe of the great continents along a narrow temperate belt, would be desert. There would be no erosion, no soil, and for any community that managed to evolve despite these rigors, no relief from suffocation by their own waste products.

But with the wind, Earth comes truly alive. Winds provide the circulatory and nervous systems of the planet, sharing out energy information, distributing both warmth and awareness, making something out of nothing.

All wind's properties are borrowed. Our knowledge of it comes at secondhand, but it comes strongly. And this combination of a force that cannot be apprehended, but

nevertheless has an undeniable existence, was our first experience of the spiritual.

We are the fruits of the wind-and have been seeded, irrigated, and cultivated by its craft.

Listen to the Air

By John (Fire) Lame Deer

"Listen to the air.
You can hear it, feel it,
smell it, taste it.
Woniya wakan, the holy air,
which renews all by its breath.
Woniya wakan, spirit, life, breath, renewal,
it means all that.
We sit together, don't touch,
but something is there,
we feel it between us
as a presence.
A good way to start thinking
about nature
is to talk to it,
talk to the rivers, to the lakes,
to the winds,
as to our relatives."

This Week: Reconnecting

Go for a walk or a bike ride and pay close attention to the direction the wind is blowing. Notice, really notice, how it helps you when it comes from behind, and how you have to work harder when it's in your face. What is the wind doing to everything you see around you during your walk or bike ride?

Actions that Focus Our Attention on the Air

1. Read this sermon, "Breath of the Universe," by UU minister, the Rev. Peggy Clarke (<http://www.westchesteruu.org/index.php/get-inspired/sermon-archive/267-breath-of-the-universe>)
2. Sit quietly when you can find a moment of solitude, close your eyes, and breathe deeply, like we do in the services on Sunday, to help us be truly present.
3. Plant trees! Trees help sequester carbon, some types more than others. Is there room near your home to plant at least one tree? Research what kind of tree would fit there best and if it's good at sequestering carbon.
4. Play Frisbee, or throw a ball, or play badminton or tennis in the wind, and watch what happens!

Fourth Week

Earth: Recommitting

Recommitting to Caring for the Earth

Earth signifies realization, bringing our vision into reality, fruition, culmination, committing to long-term actions that will create a paradigm shift and grow the climate justice movement.

Reflections about Recommitting to the Earth

Teach Your Children

Attributed to Chief Seattle

This we know:

the Earth does not belong to us,

we belong to the Earth.

This we know:

All things are connected like the blood
which unites one family.

All things are connected.

Whatever befalls the Earth
befalls the children of the Earth.

We did not weave the web of life.

We are merely a strand in it.

Whatever we do to the web,

we do to ourselves.

Beginners

By Denise Levertov

But we have only begun to love the earth.

We have only begun to imagine the fullness of
life.

How could we tire of hope?

So much is in bud.

How can desire fail?

We have only begun to imagine justice and
mercy.

Only begun to envision how it might be to
live as siblings with beast and flower, not
as oppressors.

Surely our river cannot already be hastening
into the sea of nonbeing?

Surely it cannot drag, in the silt, all that is
innocent?

Not yet, not yet—there is too much broken
that must be mended,

Too much hurt that we have done to each
other that cannot yet be forgiven.

We have only begun to know the power that
is in us

If we would join our solitudes in the
communion of struggle.

So much is unfolding that must complete
its gesture.

So much is in bud.

This Week: Recommitting to the Earth

Celebrate Earth Day this year. The first Earth Day on April 22, 1970, activated 20 million Americans from all walks of life to share their concerns about each citizen's critical role in the environment.

Their actions led to the creation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the passage of the Clean Air, Clean Water, and Endangered Species Acts. Now over one billion people in 192 countries participate in Earth Day activities, making it the largest civic observance in the world. [From the Earth Day Leadership Guide; see the following link]

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/271871/Leadership%20Toolkit%202015.pdf>

Actions that Focus Our Attention on Recommitting to the Earth

Daily Challenges

Sunday: Sustainability. Do something that reduces your carbon footprint.

Monday: Money. Save some and give some away.

Tuesday: Transportation. Walk. Take the bus. Ride your bike.

Wednesday: Water Conservation. Re-use water. Or try taking a 1-minute shower.

Thursday: Thankfulness. Enjoy the beauty of the natural world.

Friday: Food. Eat vegetarian today. Tend a garden.

Saturday: Simplicity. Reduce consumption. What can you refrain from buying today?

Climate Justice Month Resources for Parents, Children, and Youth

Activities for Young Children

Treasure Hunt Outside (Adapted from UUA Tapestry of Faith curriculum “Chalice Children”)

Materials for Activity: Paper and crayons, Gloves and trash bags (for adults)

Optional: Stickers representing items in nature (leaves, trees, acorns, squirrels, insects)

Preparation for Activity: Arrange to walk around outside your child’s home, school, or neighborhood. Take a pre-walk and look for items that show how we care for the earth. Do you or a neighbor have solar panels? Recycle bins? A compost bin? Trees or a garden you’ve planted?

Description of Activity: The children observe and document evidence of the nature around them and the ways you and your neighbors help take care of the earth.

Tell your children they will go outside to report on what kinds of nature surround them. Say that your walk will be like a treasure hunt and you will help them find nature’s treasures outdoors. Tell them they can draw, write, or place stickers on paper to keep track of what they see. Hand out paper, crayons, and (optional) stickers.

As you go, ask your children questions about what they see that is part of nature. Encourage them to point out plants and animals. How many trees or birds do they see? What about squirrels? Pigeons? If it has rained recently, are there earthworms? Is there grass? Does dry sand blow in a hot breeze? Are iced-over puddles starting to melt? Tailor your questions to your surroundings. Help the children find and place stickers on paper or take notes by writing or drawing.

As you walk, ask children if they notice anything that they think doesn’t belong. Children may notice litter. This would be a good transition to discussing ways that we care for the earth. Put on gloves and use a trash bag to pick up any litter. Show or tell the children your plan to dispose of it appropriately (recycle or trash).

Next, point out any solar panels, recycle bins, compost bins, etc. Name each item and tell the children how it helps us care for the earth.

After the walk, have the children wash their hands. You can modify this outing to accommodate any mobility challenges and make sure the outdoor space you plan to visit is accessible, in order for children to have an up-close, outdoor experience.

Story Book Suggestions for Young Children

Please Don’t Paint Our Planet Pink! by local author Gregg Kleiner, 2014. What might happen if we could SEE carbon dioxide in the atmosphere? What if CO₂ were, say, pink? An engaging, funny, and highly timely book about climate change for children (and adults!)

The Earth and I by Frank Asch, 2008. This story celebrates friendship that one child has with the Earth. They play together, listen to each other, and nourish each other. But when the Earth is sad, the child is sad, so he finds a way to make his friend, the Earth, happy.

The Earth Book by Todd Parr, 2010. With his signature blend of playfulness and sensitivity, Todd Parr explores the important, timely subject of environmental protection and conservation in this eco-friendly picture book.

The Curious Garden by Peter Brown, 2009. One boy’s quest for a greener world... one garden at a time. As time passes, the garden spreads throughout the dark, gray city, transforming it into a lush, green world.

I Can Save the Earth: One Little Monster Learns to Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle (Little Green Books), by Alison Inches and Viviana Garofoli, 2008. Little Green Books educate children on ways they can be eco-friendly.

Activities for Older Children (adapted from “Sing to the Power” UUA curriculum)

What can kids do? Plenty, right at home, without traveling to Washington or Salem to protest. Biking or walking to school rather than asking for a car ride, turning off lights that aren't in use, putting on a sweater when it gets cold rather than turning on the heat, eating less meat or no meat, buying reused or recycled items, talking to people about the reality of global warming and the need for us all to make a change.

Family Game: One fun way to explore the power of wind, a renewable energy resource which doesn't contribute to climate change, is to have wind-powered penny races. Assemble some pennies, some drinking straws, paper and/or light cardboard, scissors, tape, string, and any other household items you wish to use. Invite each member of the family to design a way move a penny across a table, using only their breath to move the penny. When everyone has completed their construction, see who can get their penny across the table the fastest.

Family Adventure: You can go on an adventure in your own home by doing an audit of your carbon footprint online. Go to the website calc.zerofootprint.net to calculate the carbon dioxide your family generates, compare your family with others, and suggest changes to your lifestyle that would be healthier for the planet (sign in using 'Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Corvallis' for school). Work together on weatherizing projects such as installing weather stripping around doors, which can make a real difference in your energy usage.

Activity for Teens

Help out on a project with the Greenbelt Land Trust: greenbeltlandtrust.org

Join 'Plant for the Planet' (youtube.com/watch?v=ZzksgMrS_7o) and plant trees.

Learn more about taking action for climate justice at 350.org

Join commit2respond.org and come to the Climate Justice Public Witness Event at UUA General Assembly in Portland, Oregon, this coming June 2015.

A Free Movie!

Forks Over Knives

Friday, March 27, 7:00 PM, at the Fellowship

"Forks Over Knives" suggests that "most, if not all, of the degenerative diseases that afflict us can be controlled, or even reversed, by rejecting our present menu of animal-based and processed foods." Some of the folks in this film were sent home to die from cancer, heart disease or diabetes but turned their lives around with big changes in diet. Diet changes also alleviate a huge threat to the world's ecosystems, as well as tackling climate change. This is a fun, positive movie! If you eat meat, don't worry. This is a process; let's take a look.

A Special Program for Everyone, Followed by Supper and Emma's Revolution Concert

Saturday, April 11, 3:00 PM at the Fellowship

The UUFC Climate Justice Committee and the Energy Action Team of the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition invite you to gather on Saturday, April 11, for a late afternoon of celebration, culminating in a concert by Emma's Revolution. We will celebrate Oregon's stunning achievements in laying out a policy, program, and political action framework that makes it possible for Oregon to show that reducing our carbon emissions by 75% from 1990 levels, "Can Be Done"and done in a manner that fits with our lives and our values.

Starting at 3 p.m., there will be four short talks, followed by small room conversations that you can drop in on to get your specific questions answered on the topics of community and personal solar, efficient lighting, heat pump water heaters, Oregon's new building codes that allow water collection and grey water recycling, and direct political action. You can attend any or all of these opportunities.

We'll share onion/fennel soup with breads and dips, fresh spring vegetables, and fruit trays in the early evening in the social hall and then move to the sanctuary to to enjoy the invigorating sounds of Emma's Revolution. Join us, if you can!

A Special Project for Everyone to Participate In

Help us celebrate what UUFC members are doing to address climate change!

The Climate Justice Committee will be conducting a special project as part of Climate Justice Month. The committee is interested in learning how members and friends of UUFC are changing old habits and taking action in light of the serious environmental and climate concerns confronting us. We know that our collective actions make a difference and we are heartened by what we can do together. Posters will be on the walls in the social hall on which each of us can identify things we are doing in six topic areas: Household, Consumer, Transportation, Food, Communication, Direct Action. Another way to share this same information will be with a printed checklist survey that will be available in April.

We will celebrate what we learn about our collective actions at the Earth Day service on April 19.