

Care for God's Creation

As members of the interfaith community, seeking to nourish a deeper understanding of our physical and spiritual rooted-ness in nature, and to encourage and inspire members of faith communities to take action on behalf of the Earth.

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Global Warming calls for:

- ◆ A trans-disciplinary approach.
- ◆ Drawing upon the knowledge of science and the insights of the world's great wisdom traditions.
- ◆ Science Asks the "How" questions; Religion or faith the "Why" questions.
- ◆ Why does it matter, why should we care? Questions of meaning and purpose, of values and ethics.

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Questions to Ponder

- ◆ What core principles or values that I hold most dear lead me to see climate change as important?
- ◆ Who are my neighbors and what is the most loving way to care for them?
- ◆ To what extent does my ethical concern reach out to other species and to future generations?
- ◆ In the face of global warming, where am I called to curtail my personal freedom out of concern for others?
- ◆ What actions or changes do I feel called to and am I willing to make?

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Top 10 Guiding Principles

- ◆ Spiritual principles many faith traditions share that can help guide our response to the challenge of climate change.

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1. Love Motivates

- ◆ People will be motivated to change not just because they finally know the facts, but because -
- ◆ They deeply Love the earth, and they want a sustainable world where polar bears and penguins and little children can all thrive.
- ◆ And because they care deeply about the kind of world they leave for their grandchildren.

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2. Everything is Interconnected

- ◆ "For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you...and a leaf of grass is no less than the journeywork of the stars."
-Walt Whitman
- ◆ The universe is a dynamic and evolving whole, with every event related to every other event.
- ◆ We are all in this together – one Earth, one humanity, one future.

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3. Sacredness of Creation

- ◆ Through the eyes of faith we see and celebrate the earth and all nature as sacred.
- ◆ Other species, as part of the creation, have intrinsic value, beyond their utilitarian value to humans.

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4. Responsibility to Future Generations

- ◆ Many Native American traditions see our responsibility as extending to 7 generations into the future.
- ◆ In the Bible, Abraham's descendents are to be as numerous as the stars – and God's covenant extends to all generations.
- ◆ We are at a key turning point in planetary history. When people in the future look back to our generation, what will our legacy be?

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5. Celebration of Diversity

- ◆ Ecology teaches that diversity is key to a healthy ecosystem.
- ◆ Celebrating diversity means living in creative harmony, not uniformity.
- ◆ Each of us add our gifts, insights and contributions, and are enriched in turn by the gifts, insights and contributions of others.
- ◆ "Others" includes non-human kind.

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6. Equity and Justice

- ◆ Justice is a major theme of the Bible, the Quran, and other sacred texts.
- ◆ Science tells us that the impacts of global warming will fall most severely on the poor and marginalized.
- ◆ Environmental refugees will exceed war refugees.
- ◆ Caring for our neighbors as we care for ourselves.
- ◆ Broadening our concept of "neighbor" to include other species as well.

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7. Right Relationship

- ◆ Shalom – more than the absence of violence, includes right relationship, balance and wholeness.
- ◆ We are part of a larger interconnected whole.
- ◆ Includes our relations with others in our local community, with others around the world, and with other species.
- ◆ Stewardship – Our capacities as humans give us special responsibility to care for the whole.
- ◆ Living in right relationship means building communities that respect and care for the larger community of life, that are socially just, ecologically sustainable, and spiritually satisfying, with none left behind.

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8. Practice Humility

- ◆ As humans we know a lot, but still have a lot to learn.
- ◆ Therefore, we should first strive to do no harm.
- ◆ There are different ways of knowing – art, music, poetry, science – all have value.

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9. Beauty and Grace

- ◆ Life is a gift.
- ◆ By cultivating a sense of awe and wonder at the beauty and miracle of creation all around us, and in us, we will grow to cherish it and care for it and appreciate it more.

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10. Hope and Joy

- ◆ We are not in this alone. Events like this day give us hope, as more and more people are coming together to meet the challenge of global warming, hope that we can make a difference.
- ◆ Find that one part of this Great Work that gives you the most joy. That is where your gifts are most needed and will be most fruitful. Focus your efforts there.

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Earth Charter

- ◆ The drafters asked: What are the deepest needs of the world today, and how might we constructively respond?
- ◆ Central idea: People in different nations and cultures can live with “respect and care for the community of life,” and in so doing “create communities that are just, sustainable, participatory, nonviolent, and compassionate.”
- ◆ May this spirit embodied in the Earth Charter be with each and every one of us.

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Care for God's Creation

The Breathe of Life

MAY 3, 2008

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