

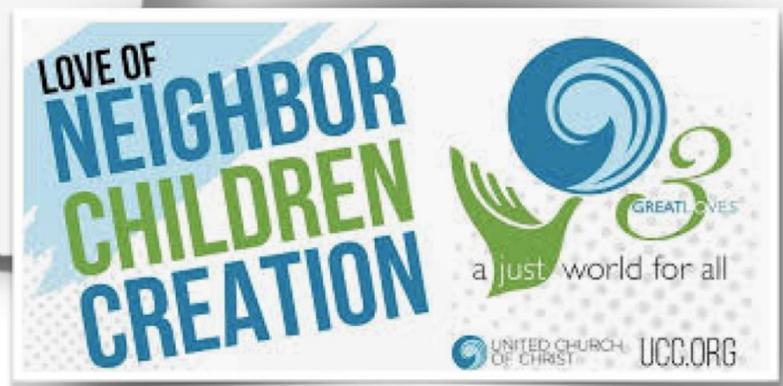
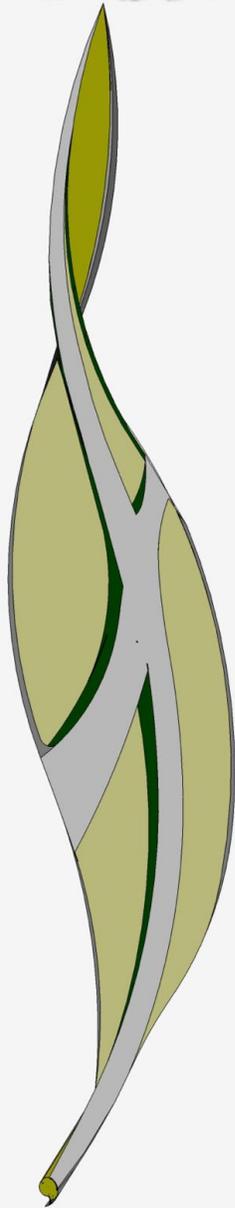
# Climate Change Sabbath Toolkit

## Love of Creation

An Initiative of the  
Nebraska UCC  
Conference Board

Designed especially  
for congregation use.

April, 2020



# Climate Change Sabbath Toolkit

A project sponsored by the Nebraska UCC Board



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## Introduction from the Nebraska UCC Board:

Dear Pastor: The Grace and Peace of God be with you and your congregation, today and always.

We are writing to invite you to participate in a new initiative of the Nebraska UCC Conference: a unified Creation Care Sabbath focused on Climate Change on the week of Earth Day.

We know that 2019 was an unprecedented year of weather, resulting in devastation for hundreds of Nebraska residents and farmers. And we know, while opinions may be varied in our pews about how we got where we are and about the human capacity to change the course of our planet, our Holy Scripture calls us to be stewards of this, God's beautiful creation. We are called by the UCC's *3 Great Loves* campaign to focus on Love of Creation across the country.

With the resources compiled in this toolkit, we hope that all our Nebraska congregations will join together to focus on learning about climate change. In our 2-page ***Primer on Climate Change*** (Section 1), you will learn that it all begins with carbon, and how it contributes to weather 'weirding'; which in turn leads to accelerated ecological change that will impact our food production, water sources, species diversity, and natural disasters. All of this relates to our choices about our energy usage, big and small. The great news is there are many individual and collective things we can all do to fulfill our role as stewards in creation care, detailed in ***Action Ideas and Resources for Creation Care*** (Section 4).

Our hope is you will take this as an opportunity to initiate dialogue, education and advocacy regarding the approaching climate crisis (using the points detailed on our next page, ***Why Observe a Climate Change Sabbath***, Section 1 page 3). We have supplied a bulletin template with suggested hymns for Sunday worship centered on Creation Care (Section 2, page 7) and provided 2 Sunday School lesson plans (Section 3, page 15). We have endeavored to provide you with a range of reasonable, scientific and non-partisan movies and resource choices that you may feel confident using in your congregation to spur discussion (Section 4, page 17). The 6 weeks of Lent provides a great timeframe to explore being in right relationship with Creation and there are plenty of ideas for an alternative Lenten 'fast' in the resources provided. We hope that your congregation will join with us in observing a Climate Change Sabbath the second Sunday after Easter (the week of Earth Day and Arbor Day). With this in mind, we are forging a partnership with [The Arbor Day Foundation](#) for Nebraska's UCC churches to create a statewide tree-planting initiative, one method of abating excess carbon in the air. We are excited about this opportunity to show our home state advantage and be Nebraska Strong on Climate Change.

While this climate crisis looms large and can feel overwhelming, when we harness the power we have in the pulpit to reach a multitude of people, we are able to make an impact that reaches far beyond ourselves. You, as a faith leader, can encourage your members to evaluate their home energy usage, and take a look at your church's usage (perhaps reducing your utility bills in the process!) You, as a congregation, can become a role model for your community, leading the way on collective action and crafting relationships with local officials like your city or utility official, and advocate to your state and federal representatives to push legislative action. We, as a statewide denomination, can greatly increase the carbon sink in Nebraska by joining in a statewide tree-planting initiative this fall, planned in partnership with the Arbor Day Foundation. Together, we can do more than what we expect. Please join us in leading your congregation towards a greener future.

Holding you in God's Love and Christ's Light. Sincerely: The Nebraska Board of the UCC.

# Why to Observe a Climate Change Sabbath

*Planning a worship service to observe a Climate Change Sabbath after Easter during the week of Arbor Day and Earth Day is a powerful way to plant seeds of hope in our collective capacity to unite in efforts to preserve our planet and our very way of life (food production, ecosystem and species survival, property and health preservation, protecting vulnerable populations), and to inspire action toward that goal. Theological perspectives and worship resources offered in this toolkit help make the case for action on the moral imperative for action on climate change. Our suggested educational events, discussions, and speakers can enhance your congregation's understanding of this intimidating issue, while action and advocacy options presented will contribute in little and large ways towards slowing the effects of climate chaos.*

## **Faith Communities are uniquely equipped to alter the partisan gridlock around climate change:**

- Worship offers visions of hope and opportunity for building fellowship and community through working and learning together on issues related to our faith. Faith communities are especially suited to offer hope for positive change and allowing persons to imagine 'what could be' and what we are called to do as people of faith.
- We know that whatever happens with the climate patterns, it will first and foremost impact 'the least of these' – the poor and the vulnerable globally, nationally and in our own communities. People of limited means and limited personal power have the least amount of capacity to prepare, adapt and survive the natural disasters and food shortages anticipated in our future. As people faithful to a God who calls us to care for the least among us, any action to slow climate change is action not on our behalf, but on theirs.
- The United Church of Christ, as well as many other denominations, has long been on record supporting action on Climate Change. [Green Faith](#) links to many faiths and denominations and what they have to say and do about climate change.
- Addressing climate change has great potential to strengthen our economy. Working to stop climate change can drive economic growth, while unchecked climate change is expected to have dire economic consequences. For example, Citibank estimates the costs of unchecked climate change at [more than \\$40 trillion by 2060](#). Meanwhile, [more than 4 million Americans](#) now work in wind, solar, energy efficiency and other clean energy jobs — far more than the 160,000 who work in the coal industry — and experts estimate that investing in revitalizing water infrastructure in the U.S. [could generate 1.3 million more jobs](#).<sup>1</sup> If we resolve global warming, we also create a new and green *Third Industrial Revolution*. In fact, the 2019 General Synod of the [UCC passed a resolution](#) endorsing the 'Green New Deal', a congressional proposal laying out a plan for tackling climate change through economic growth.
- Lastly, action is always preferable to apathy. The discouraged person asks, "Why bother?" But the wise person's response is always, "Why not try?" For this situation, there is no downside to trying. Why not try? And what are we waiting for?

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<sup>1</sup> "7 Undeniable Climate Change Facts" published by the Environmental Defense Fund. <https://www.edf.org/climate/how-climate-change-plunders-planet/climate-facts>. Copyright 2020. Accessed Jan 2, 2020.

## How to Use this Toolkit:

### Steps for Organizing a Climate Change Sabbath

- ✓ Establish a creation care committee or justice group to oversee the development of the project.
- ✓ This group may determine which components and materials to use:
  - Scripture readings, prayers, and hymns (Page 8).
  - Youth or adult education and discussion (Page 15-17).
  - Options for action steps are appropriate for your organization (Page 17).
- ✓ Consult organizations listed in sources (page 25) to request speakers in your community.
- ✓ Contact your Nebraska UCC Board member with your determinations (and your tree order, if applicable).
- ✓ Depending on your activity, don't neglect to advertise your event in your congregation and community (media release template included on page 23-24).



CartoonArts International

## Acknowledgements

*Toolkit compiled by Rev. Jessica Palys, Community Organizer and Pastor, for the Nebraska Conference of the UCC. Many thanks to the Justice & Mission team of First Congregational UCC of Hastings (Tom Genung, Judy Sandeen, Jean Stinnette and Katie Schroder) for their research; to Jack Sandeen for cover art, to Rev. Helen (Penny) Greer for the Climate Change Primer, to Ken Winston and Nebraska Interfaith Power and Light for their guidance, and to the Nebraska UCC Board for their collaboration. Information found on the internet.*

# Primer on Climate Change<sup>2</sup>

## What is Climate Change?

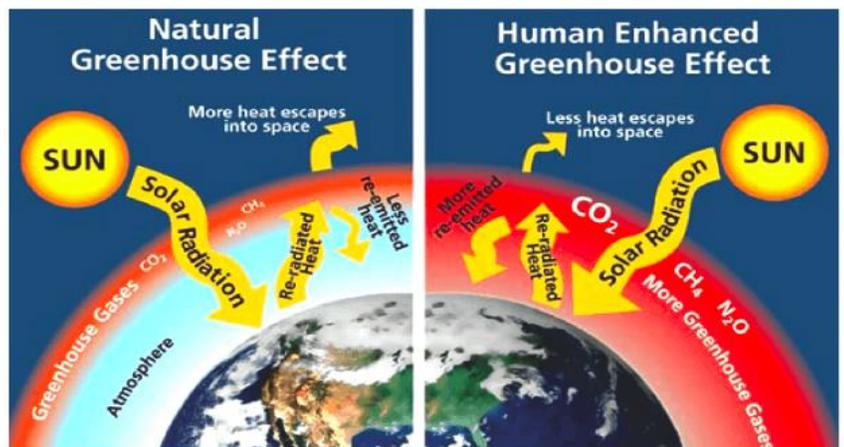
Climate is not the same as weather. Weather happens in a particular location at a particular time, using temperature, pressure, humidity and the like. Weather data has been gathered since the 1880's, and since 1960 has become very accurate with the help of weather satellites. To learn about weather before 1880, scientists use data from tree rings, ocean sediments, ice and snow cores, and pollen.

'Climate' means both the average weather over large periods of time, and the complex, interrelated system of the atmosphere, oceans, glaciers, vegetation, and the land's surface. The climate of a place like Nebraska can be described as its rainfall, snowfall, changing temperatures during the year, and so on. Scientists can generalize about a region's climate, how it varies from season to season, year to year, decade to decade or over much longer time scales. The climate (and the effects of climate change) will vary from place to place depending on latitude, the distance to the sea, mountains or other geography.

**Climate Change** refers to significant, long-term changes in the global climate – our interconnected system of sun, earth and oceans, wind, rain and snow, forests, and deserts, and everything people do. While climate doesn't cause weather, it can increase the probability of particular weather events that affect regions differently. For example, rising ocean temperatures feed hurricanes, which move slower, drop more rain and cause more damage, but also shift global ocean and atmospheric currents that melt Arctic ice affecting weather around the world. It is this systemic connectedness that makes global climate change so important and so complicated.

## What is Global Warming?

Global warming is the increase in the average temperature of the earth's atmosphere because an increased amount of the energy striking the earth from the sun is absorbed in the atmosphere by greenhouse gas molecules. The atmosphere is like an ocean of gases, mostly Nitrogen and Oxygen. Just 1% of these gases keep our planet warm enough for life to flourish, and agriculture and human civilization to develop. This 1% include the greenhouse gases of water vapor, Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), Methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) and others. Water vapor enters and exits the atmosphere quickly, but CO<sub>2</sub> can remain in the atmosphere over 200 years.



(Source: Center for Climate and Energy Solutions)

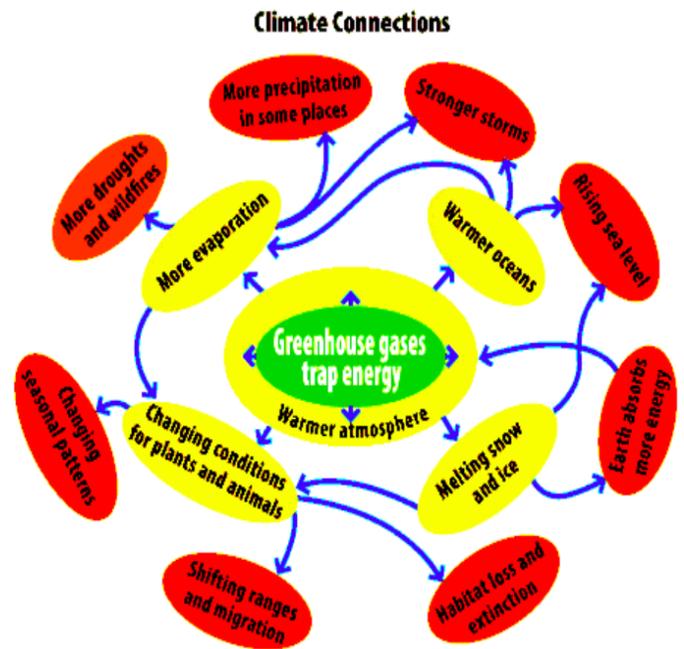
Human activity has increased amounts of carbon-containing gases in the upper atmosphere, which we know because of the type of Carbon we find as part of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>. Scientists date the beginning of the current warming trend to the end of the 18th or beginning of the 19th century when coal first came into common use. Before the industrial revolution we had around 280 parts per million of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere. This warming trend has accelerated, and is now happening quite rapidly as the populations around the world have increased burning of fossil fuels to include gasoline, diesel, kerosene and natural

<sup>2</sup> Climate Change Primer by Warm Heart Worldwide. [https://warmheartworldwide.org/climate-change/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI5frZp9nb5QIVBtVkCh1wEAIQEAAAYiAAEgKHtFD\\_BwE](https://warmheartworldwide.org/climate-change/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI5frZp9nb5QIVBtVkCh1wEAIQEAAAYiAAEgKHtFD_BwE), accessed Jan 3, 2020.

gas, as well as the petrochemicals (plastics, pharmaceuticals, fertilizers) we now make from oil. This has been exacerbated by the loss of 'carbon sinks' (large swaths of vegetation like the Amazon Rainforest that process carbon in the atmosphere) from deforestation and development. Each year, we pump more CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere - currently 413 parts per million of CO<sub>2</sub>, while forests are declining.

### How does Global Warming drive Climate Change?

Because all systems in the global climate system are connected, adding heat energy causes the global climate as a whole to change. Much of the world is covered with ocean, and the warmer the air, the more water evaporates from the Earth and the oceans. Warmer air holds more moisture. More moisture in the air makes more water available for storms, hurricanes, and typhoons. A warmer atmosphere also increases droughts and desertification; melts glaciers, mountain snow cover, the Polar ice caps, and the permafrost, which releases methane and causes sea levels to rise. Warming oceans acidify as they absorb excess CO<sub>2</sub>, affecting sea life. Changes in temperature also change the jet stream, which established the weather patterns we have around the world, making drought and unpredictable weather more common. This is why scientists have stopped focusing just on global warming and now focus on the larger topic of climate change.



(Source: US Environmental Protection Agency)

### Climate Change Impact

Because the global climate is a connected system, climate change impacts are felt everywhere. The 2010's were the hottest decade since the 1880's, with 2019 being the highest.

#### Important climate change impacts are:

- Melting Polar Ice & Rising Sea Levels – resulting in coastal land loss
- Torrential downpours and more powerful storms – with increased rainfall resulting in flooding
- Heat waves and Droughts – causing more and longer forest fires as in Australia and California<sup>3</sup>
- Changing Ecosystems - bringing about changes in fish populations and species loss
- Reduced Food Security – due to changing growing seasons and rainfall
- Increased Pests and Disease – increased temperatures result in increased insect reproduction
- Greater global migration – resulting from food shortages, flooding, fires, and natural disasters

#### Some of the effects of a warming climate in Nebraska

- Lengthening the growing season but shortening the winter, disturbing agricultural routines
- Higher temperatures bringing more heat stress days with temperatures above 100°<sup>4</sup>, risking health and increasing demand for water and energy for a/c.
- More frequent and extreme drought like in 2012
- More extreme precipitation and flooding, like 2011 and 2019

<sup>3</sup> Climate Central: [www.climatecentral.org/gallery/graphics/the-10-hottest-global-years-on-record](http://www.climatecentral.org/gallery/graphics/the-10-hottest-global-years-on-record). Accessed Jan 24,2020.

<sup>4</sup> Understanding and Assessing Climate Change: Implications for Nebraska, Bathke, et al., 2014

## Creation Care Components for a Worship Service

### Scripture Suggestions

*There are boundless options for scriptural references to creation care; here are some verses that might inspire your sermon.*

Genesis 9:8-17

Isaiah 24:3-6

Jeremiah 4:23-26

Hosea 4:3

Psalms 104

Mark 4:3-8

### Hymn Suggestions

- Traditional examples
  - All creatures of our God and king
  - All things bright and beautiful
  - For the beauty of the earth
  - We are One in the Spirit
- In the New Century Hymnal
  - God Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens
  - Pray for the Wilderness
  - Thank You God
  - God Marked a Line and Told the Sea
  - Touch the Earth Lightly
  - For the healing of the nations
- Specialty Hymns written for Environmental Stewardship and many more found here:  
<https://earthministry.org/worship/songs/><sup>5</sup>

### Bulletin Template

#### Call to Worship

*God we gather in the midst of your creation, to build each other up in the faith you have given us.*

***God we come, not alone but as part of your community.***

*We come from isolated lives and self-centered living seeking community, so that together we might be kept safe in God's love.*

***God we come, not along but as part of your community.***

*As we build together may we pray in the power of the Holy Spirit, and await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ open our eyes to see you,*

***God we come, not alone but as part of your community.***

*No one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have – Jesus Christ. Who takes our anxious thoughts and the worries that blind our sight,*

***God we come, not alone but as part of your community.***

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<sup>5</sup> Earth Ministry: Caring for all Creation, a function of Washington Interfaith Power and Light.

<https://earthministry.org/worship/songs/>. Accessed Jan 2, 2020.

*Rescue us dear God from the tumult of our busy lives. Bind us together as we breathe your quiet presence*

**God we come, not alone but as part of your community**

*Heavenly God, you who are community shelter us; Christ before us and behind us, Holy Spirit deep within us;*

**God we come, not alone but as part of your community.**

## Invocation

**Prayer of Stewardship by Catholic Relief Services**

*God of all Creation,*

*At the beginning of time*

*You placed a single mandate on humankind*

*To be stewards of Creation;*

*To replenish and nurture all generations*

*With what you have made.*

*We kneel today amid that same Creation-*

*A world that is, in many ways, more splendid than ever -*

*But, in too many ways, scarred beyond recognition.*

*Turn us from our unmindfulness.*

*Help our faith be light.*

*Help us renew the worlds that supports us*

*So we may once more know Creation*

*As it was in the beginning. Amen.*

## Confession & Pardon

Prayer of Confession (Adapted from UCC Litany of Environmental Confession)

*One: God, you created our planet, the birds, fish, and other animals and you saw all that you had created and called it good. God of life, you also formed us, the human family to be your co-regents in ruling over the works of your hands, and to act compassionately and gently to all forms of life.*

**People: Remind us, O God, and help us to change.**

*We confess that we often forget that we are utterly dependent upon you and interdependent with the rest of your creation. We confess that instead of acting compassionately and gently, we have instead over-used and abused creation, forgetting that our lifestyles impact others around the globe.*

**Forgive us, O God, and help us to change.**

*We confess that we have not done enough to protect our planet. We confess that we have failed to insist that our government act urgently and swiftly on climate. We confess that we, as consumers, have not held companies accountable for their reckless pollution and carbon consumption, nor have we worked hard enough to limit our own consumption and pollution.*

**Forgive us, O God, and help us to change.**

*God of wisdom, help us understand that whatever we do to the web of life we do to ourselves. God of power, help us acknowledge that we must act now and wake up to our moral obligation to the future of the planet, which you have entrusted to our hands.*

**Forgive us O God, and help us to change.**

## Assurance of Pardon

*Almighty God — creator, shaper and sustainer of all life: Thank you for the forgiveness and grace you offer through your Son – the redeemer of all creation. We receive your grace to us, and your love for us as we are, for you love us as we are. And today we open our eyes, ears, and hearts to the pain of the*

*planet amid the changing climate. We open our hearts to your truth, to see in you the way of healing and hope for our planet. Change us now into what you would have us be. – Move us to love and care for your world We are beloved children of God, forgiven, renewed, and sent out into the world to work for the healing of our planet and for justice, in faithfulness to God. Amen.*

#### **Kid's Message Sample:**

- Why is one of God's names Creator?: <https://www.kidsofintegrity.com/lessons/responsibility/hands-options/caring-creation><sup>6</sup>
- Object lesson with Globe or flower: [https://sermons4kids.com/earth\\_day\\_renee\\_gorby.htm](https://sermons4kids.com/earth_day_renee_gorby.htm)<sup>7</sup>

**Sermon Sample** can be found here: <https://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Sermon-Feb-12-2012.pdf>

#### **Offering Prayer of Dedication**

*Creating one, all that is came into being through your Naming: skies and planets, oceans and dry land. Your creating spirit is honored as we live with integrity toward all life. Shape our lves to be stewards in your image, that all may be safe and nurtured under our watchful care, in the name of Jesus Christ who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for all eternity. Amen.*

#### **Benediction**

*You were made for this earth, and this earth was made for you.  
Go forth to love and serve it, knowing in your deepest heart  
that you are blessed from the beginning of time.  
In the name of the One who called all things good. Amen.*<sup>8</sup>

## **Additional Prayers & Litanies**

- **Prayer for the Earth from Sr. Joan Brown, Ex. Director of NM Interfaith Power and Light**  
*We Hold the Earth.  
We hold brothers and sisters who suffer from storms and droughts intensified by climate change.  
We hold all species that suffer.  
We hold world leaders delegated to make decisions for life.  
We pray that the web of life may be mended through courageous actions to limit carbon emissions.  
We pray for right actions for adaptation and mitigation to help our already suffering earth community.  
We pray that love and wisdom might inspire my actions and our actions as communities. . . so that we may, with integrity, look into the eyes of brothers and sisters and all beings and truthfully say, we are doing our part to care for them and the future of the children. May love transform us and our world with new steps toward life.*<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.kidsofintegrity.com/lessons/responsibility/hands-options/caring-creation>

<sup>7</sup> Object lesson with Globe or flower: [https://sermons4kids.com/earth\\_day\\_renee\\_gorby.htm](https://sermons4kids.com/earth_day_renee_gorby.htm)

<sup>8</sup> Kelly Ann in Prayer, Creation Care Benediction: Original Blessing.

<https://outoftheearth.wordpress.com/2017/07/13/benediction-original-blessing-creation-care/>. Posted July 17, 2017, accessed Jan 2, 2019.

<sup>9</sup> Brown, Sister Joan, NM Interfaith Power and Light for Interfaith Power and Light.

<https://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/GeneralBlessings.pdf>, accessed Dec 28, 2019.

➤ **Prayer of Love and Healing written for Earth from Faith Climate Action Week<sup>10</sup>**

*O God of All Names and Beyond All Names,  
I pray in great gratitude this holy day for Love.  
Love raises the sun and greets me  
in each drop of water I drink,  
in each crumb of bread I taste,  
in each smile and tear I touch,  
in each child I meet.  
In a mantle of awe I stand enwrapped.  
My feet rest upon Earth and my head meets the moon.  
O Holy One, our times are fraught with challenge.  
Our Earth suffers climatic chaos,  
Men, women and children suffer from wounds of conflict,  
droughts, floods and crumbling economic systems.  
All manner of suffering and questions press into my soul.  
My small beating heart does not seem large enough...  
yet daily it keeps expanding beyond body boundaries into Compassion.  
Each morning Love rises beyond a known horizon in the unknown day.  
Each morning Hope beckons me into my stardust destiny.  
Each noontime Grace feeds me with Love.  
Each evening an invisible Breath enfolds me in a shawl of mercy.  
O Holy one Who Is Love, Hope, Grace and Breath  
transform our sadness and doubt into songs for Life.  
We pray for our beloved planet and all brothers and sisters.  
May healing waters bathe the rivers and oceans.  
May small, deliberate actions grow seeds of Earth justice.  
May one prophetic note of the smallest birdsong courageously sung  
on a busy street at dawn inspire leaders to free their voices to speak  
for the Common Good and future generations.  
O God of All Names and Beyond All Names, Whose Face is Love  
May I and we collectively  
Be the face of Transforming Love  
In this moment, In this day, In these times. Amen.*

➤ **Prayer from the National Council of Churches<sup>11</sup>**

*Gracious God, your amazing love extends through all time and space, to all parts of your creation, which you created and called good. You made a covenant with Noah and his family, putting a rainbow in the sky to symbolize your promise of love and blessing to every living creature, and to all successive generations. You made a covenant with Abraham and Sarah, blessing them and their descendants throughout the generations. You made a covenant with Moses and the Israelite people to all generations, giving them the 10 commandments and challenging them to choose life. In Jesus, you invite us to enter into a new covenant, in communion with all who seek to be faithful to you. As people of faith, we are called into covenant. Your covenant of faithfulness and love extends to the*

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.faithclimateactionweek.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/2016-Prayers-for-All-Traditions.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.faithclimateactionweek.org/prayers-and-climate-blessings/>, accessed Dec 28, 2019.

whole creation. We pray for the healing of the earth, that present and future generations may enjoy the fruits of creation, and continue to glorify and praise you.

➤ **Litany of Commitment<sup>12</sup>**

**Leader:** As we seek to relax our grip so that the earth, our fragile sister, might rest from our labors, help us to see our world more vividly than we have done in the past.

**People:** **Grant us vision for the challenges of this age and give us hearts full of courage for the future.**

**Leader:** As we seek to be wise stewards of the gifts of the earth in timber and oil, coal, and gas, help us to know your world more humanely than we have in the past.

**People:** **Make us learn that wisdom which we see among those wise and humble people of the earth, that we might walk with care and reverence so as to caress our fair sister.**

**Leader:** Sharing God, draw us to contemplation and silence so that we might see, in wonder, our lives intertwined with the squirrels and the cardinal, the creatures great and small, the beauty of each season. Help us to see the birth, growth, death, and rebirth so as to give us courage in the ongoing creation of our Creator.

**People:** **Deepen our faith and enliven our thinking, nourish our bodies and strengthen our souls, that we may be your message in the world, your servants for the common wellness of the earth. Make us weavers of a new order, crafters of a new earth.**

**Leader:** Let us go forth from this sacred ark with steady hand, uplifted heart, clear eye and alert mind, firm step, and willing hands. Call us to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, in the love with earth, and with our siblings. Give us a measure of the Spirit that these commitments we make before you might make our work holy.

**People:** **May we arrive at fresh springs of renewal through God's holy Word, in our communities of faith, and in deep solidarity with all creation. Let all the creation hear and bear witness. Amen.**

➤ **Prayer for Faithful Leadership on Climate (from CRC)<sup>13</sup>**

Creator God, we declare with joy and trust that our world belongs to you. For the fierce love with which you hold us and the rest of your creation, we declare

**Our world belongs to God.**

For creation's awesome beauty and its bountiful provision, we declare

**Our world belongs to God.**

For the manifold ways that it reveals your glory and draws us closer to you, we declare

**Our world belongs to God.**

Amidst its present groaning, we declare

**Our world, broken and scarred, still belongs to God.**

To our leaders, working to seek answers to the climate crisis, we declare

**Our world belongs to God.**

May our leaders be motivated by compassion, and not by fear. May their goal be justice and equity, not political posturing. For the sake of the people and the ministries of your Church across the globe already being affected by climate disruption, may we seek consensus over controversy; action over apathy. For the sake of our children and grandchildren, we confess our complicity in creation's degradation, recommit ourselves to our earth-keeping task, and gratefully declare

**Our world belongs to God.**

<sup>12</sup> Rochelle, Jay C., 1990. <http://www.webofcreation.org/Worship/liturgy/litany.htm>, accessed Dec 28, 2019.

<sup>13</sup> Climate Change Insert, from the Office of Social Justice of the Christian Reformed Church of North America; <http://justice.crcna.org/creation-care-resources>, accessed Dec 28, 2019.

*As your people, participating now in your ongoing work of renewal and longing for the day when you will bring that work to completion, we declare*

***Our world belongs to God.***

*Our world belongs to you, O God.*

***Hallelujah! Come, Lord Jesus.***

➤ **Prayer of Intercession from the Sanctuary Centre<sup>14</sup>**

***For people living with the affects of climate change now:***

*Leader: For the sake of those facing rising temperatures, drought and water shortages,*

***All: Creator God, in your mercy, renew this damaged world.***

*Leader: For the sake of those facing unpredictable weather, disrupted seasons and failed crops,*

***All: Creator God, in your mercy, renew this damaged world.***

*Leader: For the sake of those facing flooding, land loss and salination of vital water supplies,*

***All: Creator God, in your mercy, renew this damaged world.***

*Leader: For the sake of all those who fear the changing climate,*

***All: Creator God, in your mercy, renew this damaged world.***

*Leader: For the sake of the poor, the vulnerable, and the refugee*

***All: Creator God, in your mercy, renew this damaged world.***

*Leader: For the sake of us all,*

***All: Creator God, in your mercy, recreate our hearts that we might partner with you to renew this damaged world.***

***For leaders and politicians:***

*Leader: Father, we pray for you to raise up a generation of leaders with the courage to take responsibility for our changing climate, and the part we have played in it. Father, we intercede for our politicians and leaders – cause them to act in the best interests of all nations today, and all peoples’ in the future, in order to avoid catastrophic changes. Father, we ask for a generation of leaders who will be willing to act justly so that those who have contributed so little to the problems we are facing, and have fewer resources with which to face it, are not left to shoulder our burden. Father, we ask for you to fill the hearts of all who lead rich nations – give them your mercy and compassion on poor countries already suffering the effects of a changing climate. Just as they have been moved to cancel debt in the past, encourage them also to release funds so that poor communities can adapt to the effects of climate change, and develop cleanly.*

***All: Lord, in your mercy, lead our leaders to truth, and transformation***

***For scientists and engineers:***

*Leader: Creator God – creator of our world, of science, and of creativity itself, You hold all knowledge. We praise you and thank you for the insights you have given people into engineering, science and systems in the past. In your mercy, grant revelation to scientists and engineers that they might discover solutions and systems to aid adaptation. Not that we might continue to take the earth and its resources for granted, or grow arrogant, but that your precious children might be spared.*

***All: Lord, in your mercy, lead our scientists and engineers to truth, and transformation.***

***For development agencies and local communities striving to adapt to climate change:***

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<sup>14</sup> The Sanctuary Centre: where the world and worship meet. “Prayers In Response to Climate Change.”

<http://www.thesanctuarycentre.org/resources/written-prayers-prayers-in-response-to-climate-change.pdf>. Accessed Jan 2, 2020.

*Leader: Compassionate defender, we thank you for all those you have inspired and equipped to help communities suffering the effects of climate change now.*

***All: Spirit of God, fill their minds with wisdom, their spirits with energy and their hands with skill.***

*Leader: Precious counselor, we thank you for all who are speaking out on behalf of the voiceless.*

***All: Spirit of God, open the ears of the powerful to hear them.***

*Leader: Limitless comforter, we thank you for all who are serving and giving so that those in need can adapt to a changing climate. All: Spirit of God, fill their hands with more resources to give to those in need.*

*Leader: Spirit of truth, speak to our hearts and tell us what you would have us do.*

***All: Spirit of God, we surrender to you. Amen.***

### **For Us**

***All: Father of creation, we thank you for all that you have made; For the joy and glimpses of you we find in nature's beauty, For the variety of all you have provided through its resources. Help us to tread lightly and use wisely, Valuing the needs of others, and of creation, above our own desires. Challenge us where we need to change our lifestyles, Convict us when we need to speak out on behalf of a voiceless people, or world And soften us where we have stood in judgment of others. Father in your mercy, change us and use us For the restoration of your world, and the protection of all your children. Amen.***

### ➤ **Prayer for our Earth from Pope Francis Encyclical<sup>15</sup>**

*All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.*

*You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.*

*Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.*

*Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.*

*O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.*

*Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth.*

*Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united*

*with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light.*

*We thank you for being with us each day.*

*Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.*

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<sup>15</sup> Pope Francis, <https://www.faithclimateactionweek.org/prayers-and-climate-blessings/>, accessed Dec 28, 2019.

## Primary Sunday School Lessons A & B

From Green Church, Caretakers of God's Creation<sup>16</sup>

**Objectives:** The children will hear the biblical story of Creation; recognize that God wants us to be good stewards of creation; learn that being a good steward means to take personal responsibility for taking care of the earth, and experience ways to take care of creation.

**Bible Story:** Genesis 1:1-28, 31a; the story of Creation, including human beings' responsibility for taking care of what God has created.

**Bible Verse:** Psalm 8:6 CEV: *You let us rule over everything your hands have made.*

### Lesson Option A: Green Print Shopping Bags<sup>17</sup>

Preparation: Procure and provide a plain, light-colored cloth shopping bag for each child, old newspapers, used cardboard or posterboard, green paint, shallow tray, smocks, and hand-washing supplies. Cover table with old newspapers and pour green paint into shallow tray.

#### Activity Instructions:

Have each child wear a smock to protect clothing. Give each child cloth bag, and place posterboard or cardboard inside the bag. Show children how to fold one hand into a fist, dip the side of their fist into paint, and press it onto the bag to make the foot part of a footprint. A thumbprint makes the big toe, and other fingers make the 4 other toes. Encourage the children to make more than one footprint on their bags.

Script: *The green footprints we are making remind me of the words 'carbon footprint' or 'ecological footprint' these two kinds of footprints are talking about the damage we do to the earth. Think about walking along the beach. When we walk on the wet sand, we can stop, look behind us, and see our footprints. The water from the ocean washing away the sandy footprints, but the earth cannot wash away things we do to harm it.*

*Can you think of some ways we leave harmful footprints on the earth? Ways that we are hurting God's creation?* (Throwing away too much trash, cutting down forests that are homes for animals, using too much water and electricity, polluting the air?) *Can you guess what happens to animals like turtles, fish, and birds when they eat trash like plastic bags or rings?* (They die.)

*An average person makes about 4.5 pounds of garbage per day. More than half of that trash goes to landfills. About 70,000 truckloads of garbage are sent to landfills in North America every day. Lined up bumper to bumper, over a year they would stretch halfway to the moon. That's too much trash! And in order to make plastic bags, we must use the earth's energy resources like oil. One way we can help is to use cloth bags instead of plastic bags. When we think ahead and take reusable bags when we shop, we reduce how much trash we make, and we reduce the amount of energy resources like oil needed to manufacture the plastic bags. Reduce is an important word. When we reduce, we use less of something. When we reduce how much trash we make, we are helping God's world.*

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<sup>16</sup> Children's Lessons borrowed from Flegal, Daphna and Suzann Wade: Green Church: Caretakers of God's Creation. Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2010. Lesson 1, Second Week: Think Green (page 6-14).

<sup>17</sup> *ibid*, pg 14.

## Lesson Option B: Hear, See, Enact the Story of Creation<sup>18</sup>

Please note: this is really a 2-part lesson that could be lost if too much time is taken with the clay section. Please be conscientious of your time frame and adjust as you see fit.

Preparation: purchase or make play dough. You will need ¼ cup (2 oz) per child. Provide wax paper and crayons. Photocopy “Help the Earth Rest” included in appendix for each child.

Read the Bible Verse through once, ask all the children to listen well. Then, start activity.

- **Activity Instructions:**

Give each child a sheet of wax paper and ¼ cup playdoh. Speak aloud:

Day 1: ***Let’s review the story of Creation from Genesis Chapter 1. On the first day, God created light, day, and night. Quickly rework your playdoh into a shape that reminds you of daytime. Now rework your playdoh into something that reminds you of night.***

Day 2: ***On the second day, God created water and sky. Use half of the playdoh to make waves of water. Use the other half to make clouds.***

Day 3: ***Now, day number 3. On the third day, God created rivers, lakes, oceans, dry land, mountains, and all kinds of plants and trees. Quickly mound your dough into a tall mountain. Now use your dough to make a tree.***

Day 4: ***We are on day number 4. On the fourth day, God created the sun, moon, and stars. Make either the sun, the moon or some stars with your playdoh.***

Day 5: ***Now for day number 5. On the fifth day, God created fish, other sea animals, and birds. Make either a fish or a bird.***

Day 6: ***We are on Day 6. On the sixth day, God created land animals and people. Shape your playdoh into an animal or into the shape of a person.***

Day 7: ***Now for Day 7. What did God make on the seventh day? (....) Nothing. God rested on the seventh day.*** (Pack up children’s playdoh, and have the children wash their hands.)

- Say: ***Our Bible tells us that God blessed the seventh day as a day of rest. The word we use to describe this day of rest is Sabbath. The Sabbath is a day when we can stop and think about God. It is also a day when we can stop and allow the earth to rest. I wonder what we can do to help the earth have a Sabbath.***
- (For older kids: have them search the bible for when biblical characters ‘rest’ and use the exercise to match pictures to the scriptures referenced.)
- Handout a copy of “Help the Earth Rest” to each child. Ask the children to place an X on the pictures that show ways we don’t use the earth’s resources wisely. Talk with the children about ways we can let the earth rest. These might include the ideas pictures on “Help the Earth Rest” as well as not watching television for one day or not using the car for one day.
- Say: ***All the things we talked about save energy. When we make choices that save energy, we are saving the earth’s resources. We are giving the earth a rest.***
- Turn “Help the Earth Rest” over. Let the children use crayons to draw a picture of something they can do to help the earth rest.
- Read the “Caretaker of God’s Creation Covenant” with the children. Then handout the Good Steward’s checklist for children to take home.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., pg 19

# High School or Adult Bible Study & Discussion Resources

## Discussion Topics & Guides

- The United Church of Christ has long been on record supporting actions to prevent Climate Change. You may choose to use an adult discussion forum to analyze the 2007 UCC General Synod Resolution on Climate Change, found here: <https://www.ucc.org/environmental-ministries-synod-resolutions-a-resolution-on-climate>, or any of the environmental resolutions passed by past Synods (list found here: [www.ucc.org/environmental-resolutions-at-general-synod](http://www.ucc.org/environmental-resolutions-at-general-synod)).
- [Sustaining Creation](https://sustainingcreation.org/wp-content/uploads/Participant-Handouts-Sustaining-Creation-Series-6-26-17.pdf) Guided Small Group Faith Journey by UCC Minister, Rev. Dr. Terry Gallagher, found here: <https://sustainingcreation.org/wp-content/uploads/Participant-Handouts-Sustaining-Creation-Series-6-26-17.pdf>
- It's God's World: Christian Care for Creation and Global Warming, a 5 Session Study for Congregations by Vera White, made available through Interfaith Power and Light: [www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/Gods-World.pdf](http://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/Gods-World.pdf)
- Discuss the 2019 UCC [General Synod Resolution endorsing the Green New Deal](https://ucceverywhere.org/synod/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Comm.-15-Supporting-the-Green-New-Deal-FINAL-Post-Plenary.pdf), to be found here: <https://ucceverywhere.org/synod/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Comm.-15-Supporting-the-Green-New-Deal-FINAL-Post-Plenary.pdf>
- Christianity, Climate Change and Sustainable Living: 5 Bible Studies from the Jubilee Centre: <http://jubilee-centre.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Christianity-Climate-Change-and-Sustainable-Living-Bible-Studies.pdf>

## Individual and Congregational Action Ideas and Resources for Creation Care

*Faith leaders have a crucial voice and congregations can make a significant contribution to the movement slow climate change. The following section divides advocacy into 3 arenas: educational, individual and congregational choices, and legislative and media advocacy.*

## Educational Advocacy

*Just the act of educating yourself and your community has great impact on this issue. If you would like to offer a larger, community-wide educational event, check with [Humanities Nebraska](#) to see if their mini-grants will help with funding. Here are some different methods of using education to create change:*

### Screen a Documentary at your Church

*Be sure to advertise to your wider community and include an action step following the movie (like having info on energy usage available, or signing a postcard!)*

### Host a Speaker event at your church

*There are speakers available to visit your congregation from Nebraska Interfaith Power and Light, including our own UCC board member Rev. Helen (Penny) Grier. Many of the changes needed to slow climate change can only happen in the seat of government. As a community of faith, you have a surprisingly strong voice in your local governance, and the opportunity to create that relationship is waiting for you!*

- Interfaith Power & Light, Nebraskans for Solar or other Climate Change organization
- City, Utility or Power District Official to discuss local energy initiatives
- A state or federal elected representative to discuss legislative progress

# Climate Change Films for Education and Discussion

## Documentaries

***Six Degrees Could Change the World***, 2015: (71 min). Thorough overview of the effect each degree in temperature change has on the world. Western Nebraska featured. Very straightforward, scientific presentation with regional anecdotes illustrating impact. Free on Youtube,

***Chasing Ice***, 2012: (75 min). Created by National Geographic photographer James Balog: a visually stunning journey into a multi-year record of the world's changing glaciers through time-lapse cameras, with clear explanation of glaciers' role in the climate crisis. 2014 Emmy Winner; FilmsforAction.org.

***Before the Flood***, 2014: (96 min). Controversial film featuring Leonardo DiCaprio's journey to five continents and the Arctic to show the interconnectedness of climate warming, development, migration, natural resource use and the global economy. Film provides suggestions for impacting change on an individual as well as institutional level. Free online.

***A Climate of Change***, 2014: (75 min). Good visuals, very scientific. Discusses Canada oil sands and pipelines, how use of coal and oil leads to water contamination, compares how the cigarette industry's approach to smoking prevention mirrors how coal companies promote coal as safe. Free online.

***The Age of Consequences***, 2017: (80 min). Looks at the effects of global warming through the lens of national security and global stability. The global warming documentary interviews multiple admirals, generals, security experts and military veterans, on their perspectives of how climate change intensifies social tensions and conflict. Available for rent on Amazon Prime.

***Paris to Pittsburgh***, 2018: (77 min). A hopeful and energetic film covering the reaction of American cities and leaders to the US retreat from the Paris Accords in 2017. Available through Nebraska Interfaith Power and Light; [www.nebraskaipl.org](http://www.nebraskaipl.org).

***Journey of Hope: The Mayflower Carbon Neutral Story***, 2014 (44 min) about how one UCC church in Minneapolis worked toward being a carbon-free church. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=43WhegGcQsS](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=43WhegGcQsS)

***Disobedience: The Courage to Break Free***, 2016 (41 min). For the congregation that needs inspiration in the face of the despair of the climate crisis, this is a movie about civil disobedience around the world against the causes of climate change. Free at filmsforaction.org.

## Short films for use in worship

***Climate Change 101 with Bill Nye*** (4 min) Produced by National Geographic, includes actions steps. Found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EtW2rrLHs08>

***Causes and Effects of Climate Change*** (3 min) published by National Geographic, includes action steps. Found here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G4H1N\\_yXBIA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G4H1N_yXBIA)

***NASA's A Year in the life of co2***. (3 min); A supercomputer model of the production and movement of gases across the globe. Found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x1SgmFa0r04>

***Greta Thunberg and Support for Planting Trees*** (3 min). Greta and George Monbiot talk about funding natural solutions to climate. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Q0xUXo2zEY&vl=en-US>

# Individual / Congregational Climate Choices Challenge

*Consider how individual and congregational changes can make an impact on our climate crisis:*

## Carbon Footprint Calculator and Energy Audit

Calculate your congregation's carbon footprint with Cool Congregation's [Footprint Calculator](#) and use their tips to reduce your footprint. The [Kill A Watt EZ Energy audit](#) tool allows you to view your household or church building energy usage. Use this tool to see where you can make strides to conserve energy, like installing LED lights. Your library may have it available for checkout, or it is available online. Your utility company should have tips for lowering energy usage.

## Solar energy investment or installation

Check with your local utility company about whether your town has renewable energy sources available. Some corners of Nebraska are installing solar farms and looking for community investment, which may have the added benefit of lowering your utility bills. [Nebraskans for Solar](#) is currently fundraising and donating solar to non-profits housing food pantries and homeless shelters. Alternately, the [UCC Cornerstone Fund](#) offers low interest loans if your congregation wants to consider installing solar panels on the roof of the church building.

## Your Diet and Buying Power

Beef and Palm Oil production, especially in developing countries, are major causes of deforestation. Both products are largely used in fast food franchises. Cattle, in particular, require more than twice the acreage of other meat sources, and produce methane, a bad greenhouse gas that converts to Carbon Dioxide. Any reduction of your meat or beef consumption – like Meatless Mondays or avoiding McDonald's burgers – is good for both your health and the planet. Find easy steps here: <https://foodprint.org/eating-sustainably/eating-meat-sustainably/>.

## Join in our Statewide UCC Tree Planting Effort

*Every tree increases the 'carbon sink' or ability of the earth to process the carbon in our atmosphere – therefore, tree planting is a concrete action that can compliment your effort to conserve energy and reduce carbon. The Nebraska Board of the UCC is working with [the Arbor Day Foundation](#) to secure tree donations for all the UCC Congregations in Nebraska. We will be in touch with your congregation to learn how many trees you would like to plant. Trees will be available for pickup at your fall association meeting, and the Arbor Day Foundation has arborists available to teach tree planting and participate in a ceremony.*

## Legislative Advocacy with Media Templates

*In the drive to slow climate change and diminish its impacts, energy usage, carbon production, and climate change policy are all important, and can be approached at all levels of government.*

- **Local.** Nebraska is the only state with all public power, meaning all of our electricity is provided by public utilities, so voters have a voice in management. Electricity generation is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. We need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions 50% by 2030 and be at zero net carbon emissions by 2050. Your congregation can push your local public power district to set goals of 100 % renewable energy or net zero carbon dioxide emissions.
- **State.** Nebraska needs to establish a state Climate Action Plan in order to help its communities, businesses, farmers, ranchers and urban residents adapt to the impacts of climate change and set goals for greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate the causes of climate change. Contact your Nebraska Senator and the Governor to call for a Climate Action Plan.
- **National.** We need national legislation that will lead to emissions reductions consistent with the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 C. This will require significant progress by 2030 and a

comprehensive response that moves all sectors of our economy toward net-zero emissions by 2050. Such legislation must address the impacts of climate change on society's most vulnerable communities and promote a just transition to a clean energy economy for all. The best proposal for this is a bipartisan bill called the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act of 2019, H.R. 763.

### Letter Templates for Nebraska Senator, Governor and US Senator

*Below is a suggested language for your utility company and state senator or Governor. On the following page is a formatted postcard for our Nebraska US Senators with their addresses, (that can be folded, sealed on 3 sides and mailed) supporting the bipartisan federal legislation on carbon that will be introduced to the U.S. Senate in 2020's legislative session. Use as a bulletin insert or collect after worship.*

Dear Senator / Governor ..,

As a person of faith and member of \_\_\_\_\_ Church of the United Church of Christ, care for God's creation is a high priority for me when I vote. I believe we partner with God in caring for our planet, earth's resources, and the health of future generations. As witness to the devastating floods of 2019, I would like to see my elected officials take all possible action to diminish the impacts of Climate Change. Our state needs a state Climate Action Plan in order to help its communities, businesses, farmers, ranchers and urban residents adapt to the impacts of climate change and set goals for greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate the causes of climate change. We must act now to ensure healthy, stable, and prosperous future generations in America.

Please make this a priority this year, there is no time to waste.

Signed, your constituent:

### Letter to the Editor

*You, your congregation, or your planning committee could make a strong statement to your community by submitting a letter to your local paper articulating your/their support for any and all initiatives to diminish the climate crisis or support those caught by its impact. Check with your local paper regarding their letter policy (for word limits, timing, signature requirements). Sample language could include:*

Dear Editor,

We are living through the unique moment of glimpsing the coming climate crisis and still being able to soften its impact. As a person of faith and member of \_\_\_\_\_ Church of the United Church of Christ, I believe we partner with God in caring for our planet, earth's resources, and the health of future generations. But more importantly, we act as the hands and feet of Christ in caring for all of God's beloved children. As we witness the devastation of our natural world, from Nebraska floods to Australian fires to Indonesian typhoons, we know that those most affected will be the most disadvantaged in our global world today; the poor, the disabled, the weak, and people from countries with inadequate infrastructure and resources to care for their own. When we turn a blind eye to legislative and regulatory action today that could impact climate, we turn a blind eye to the inevitable suffering and devastation the 'least of these' will experience tomorrow. But if we act today, we could (potentially reduce carbon emissions by 40% in the next 12 years if we pass the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act, or substitute your own state or town project / policy). I call on my elected officials take all possible action to diminish the impacts of Climate Change. (221 words; usual limit is 250)

Sincerely,

Your name and/or congregation

Dear Senator \_\_\_\_\_

As a person of faith and a member of \_\_\_\_\_ Church of the United Church of Christ, care for God's creation is a high priority for me when I vote. I believe we are partners in caring for our planet, earth's resources and the health of future generations. As witness to the devastating floods of 2019, I would like to see my representatives take all possible action to diminish the impacts of Climate Change.

The bipartisan Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act, which would reduce carbon emissions by 40% in 12 years while creating 2.1 million jobs and staying revenue neutral, is a good start to drive down America's carbon pollution. We must also invest in green infrastructure and jobs with the Moving Forward Act, which would upgrade the country's interstate electrical grid to expand renewable energy use as well as incentivize the transition to electric vehicles. With these bills, we can unleash American technology, innovation and ingenuity to keep future generations healthy, stable and prosperous in America.

Please support these important bills when they are reintroduced in the Senate.

Signed, your constituent:

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

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

Dear Senator \_\_\_\_\_

As a person of faith and a member of \_\_\_\_\_ Church of the United Church of Christ, care for God's creation is a high priority for me when I vote. I believe we are partners in caring for our planet, earth's resources and the health of future generations. As witness to the devastating floods of 2019, I would like to see my representatives take all possible action to diminish the impacts of Climate Change.

The bipartisan Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act, which would reduce carbon emissions by 40% in 12 years while creating 2.1 million jobs and staying revenue neutral, is a good start to drive down America's carbon pollution. We must also invest in green infrastructure and jobs with the Moving Forward Act, which would upgrade the country's interstate electrical grid to expand renewable energy use as well as incentivize the transition to electric vehicles. With these bills, we can unleash American technology, innovation and ingenuity to keep future generations healthy, stable and prosperous in America.

Please support these important bills when they are reintroduced in the Senate.

Signed, your constituent:

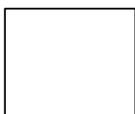
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Senator Deb Fischer**  
454 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510



**Senator Ben Sasse**  
107 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510



2 2

## Press Release Template

Mark your congregation's participation in the statewide tree-planting with a press release to your local news source. Or, use the template to invite your community to your film screening or when hosting a speaker on climate change. A template media release for each of these follows.

### Press Release Template 1 (On Your Stationary)

Advisory For Immediate Release  
April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Contact: Pastor Jane Smith  
402-XXX-XXXX

## Angelic UCC Church offers Screening of *Chasing Ice*, 2015

### Documentary is part of Nebraska-wide Climate Change Sabbath

**Eden, NE** – Angelic UCC will offer a free screening of the documentary, *Chasing Ice* (2015) as part of their Climate Change Sabbath – a statewide effort to offer education and initiate action on climate change here in Eden, Nebraska. By participating in this Climate Change Sabbath, Angelic UCC joins with dozens of United Church of Christ churches in Nebraska who feel their commitment to stewardship of God's creation calls for prayers *and* action. UCC Churches have been offering education, hosting speakers, contacting elected officials, analyzing church energy usage and this fall, will be planting hundreds of trees across the state to increase Nebraska's carbon sink. The initiative is part of a statewide effort to impact the climate crisis by collective action. The movie is open to the public, and all are welcome.

The United Church of Christ is one of the US's oldest denominations, and in 2020 they have asked all congregations to focus on Love of Creation.

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| <b>Who:</b>   | Angelic UCC Church   |
| <b>What:</b>  | Screening of the Documentary, A Climate of Change, and discussion      |
| <b>Where:</b> | Angelic Church, 123 God Street, Eden, NE                               |
| <b>When:</b>  | 1 pm Sunday  |
| <b>Why:</b>   | To inform our community about what can be done to avert climate change |

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## Press Release Template 2 (On Your Stationary)

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Advisory For Immediate Release  
October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Contact: Pastor Jane Smith  
402-XXX-XXXX

### **Angelic UCC Church plants 10 Trees As Part of Statewide Faith-based Carbon Reduction Effort**

**Eden, NE** – This week, Angelic UCC will join with dozens of United Church of Christ churches of Nebraska in fulfilling their commitment to stewardship of God’s creation by adding 10 more carbon-eating trees to Nebraska’s ecosystem. The initiative is part of a statewide effort to impact the climate crisis by decreasing energy usage and increasing Nebraska’s ‘carbon sink’. The trees are to be donated by the Arbor Day Foundation and a planting ceremony will be held.

The tree planting is in addition to other action steps initiated by Angelic UCC in response to a Climate Change Sabbath back in April, which was sponsored by the Nebraska Conference of the United Church of Christ and has resulted in 400\* trees being planted by 40\* congregations in 35\* Nebraska towns, as well as solar investment, energy audits and energy-use reduction for congregations and in members’ homes.

The United Church of Christ is one of the US’s oldest denominations, and in 2020 they have asked all congregations to focus on Love of Creation.

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>Who:</b>   | Angelic UCC Church and the Nebraska Conference of the UCC |
| <b>What:</b>  | Tree-Planting   |
| <b>Where:</b> | Church Grounds and members’ homes                         |
| <b>When:</b>  | 1 pm Sunday   |
| <b>Why:</b>   | To reduce carbon levels                                   |

###

## Works Cited

- 1 <https://greenfaith.org/campaigns>
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- 3 Climate Change Primer by Warm Heart Worldwide. [https://warmheartworldwide.org/climate-change/?gclid=EAIAIqobChMI5frZp9nb5QIVBtVkCh1wEAIQEAAAYAiAAEgKHtFD\\_BwE](https://warmheartworldwide.org/climate-change/?gclid=EAIAIqobChMI5frZp9nb5QIVBtVkCh1wEAIQEAAAYAiAAEgKHtFD_BwE).
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- 8 Object lesson with Globe or flower: [https://sermons4kids.com/earth\\_day\\_renee\\_gorby.htm](https://sermons4kids.com/earth_day_renee_gorby.htm)
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- 12 <https://www.faithclimateactionweek.org/prayers-and-climate-blessings/>, accessed Dec 28, 2019.
- 13 Rochelle, Jay C., 1990. <http://www.webofcreation.org/Worship/liturgy/litany.htm>, accessed Dec 28, 2019.
- 14 Climate Change Insert, from the Office of Social Justice of the Christian Reformed Church of North America; <http://justice.crcna.org/creation-care-resources>, accessed Dec 28, 2019.
- 15 The Sanctuary Centre: where the world and worship meet. “Prayers In Response to Climate Change.” <http://www.thesanctuarycentre.org/resources/written-prayers-prayers-in-response-to-climate-change.pdf>.
- 16 Pope Francis, <https://www.faithclimateactionweek.org/prayers-and-climate-blessings/>, accessed Dec 28, 2019.
- 17-19 Children’s Lessons borrowed from Flegal, Daphna and Suzann Wade: Green Church: Caretakers of God’s Creation. Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2010. Lesson 1, Second Week: Think Green (page 6-14).

## Additional Information Sources

- The Arbor Day has many resources: <https://www.arborday.org/trees/climatechange/>
- Nebraska Humanities (<https://humanitiesnebraska.org/grants/grant-opportunities.html>) has grant funding available for community events that include discussions
- Interfaith Power & Light ([www.interfaithpowerandlight.org](http://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org)) is a national organization with state-based chapters which offer local information and campaigns, like [www.NebraskaIPL.org](http://www.NebraskaIPL.org).
- [www.ucc.org/pollinator sign up](http://www.ucc.org/pollinator_sign_up) UCC environmental ministries blog
- [www.ucc.org/for the love of children](http://www.ucc.org/for_the_love_of_children) covers environment in relationship to children
- [Greenfaith.org/christian ecospirituality](http://Greenfaith.org/christian_ecospirituality) offers resources for worship, web-based, articles, books
- [www.eco-justice.org/Greening-Basics.asp](http://www.eco-justice.org/Greening-Basics.asp) “Greening Your Church”: Tons of ideas
- <https://livingthechange.net/commitment-tool> Personal commitment tips for sustainable living regarding energy, transport, and diet
- [www.foodprint.org](http://www.foodprint.org) for more information about how diet relates to climate change
- [www.coolcongregations.org](http://www.coolcongregations.org) Start-up kits for congregations and households, plus carbon calculators
- [www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=HOME\\_ENERGY\\_YARDSTICK.showGetStarted&s=mega](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=HOME_ENERGY_YARDSTICK.showGetStarted&s=mega) Energy Efficiency calculators and action workbook to download
- [www.seia.org/state-solar-policy/nebraska-solar](http://www.seia.org/state-solar-policy/nebraska-solar) on solar expansion in Nebraska
- [www.nebraskansforsolar.org/green-watts-for-good](http://www.nebraskansforsolar.org/green-watts-for-good)
- [www.cornerstonefund.org/churches/borrowing/mortgage-loans/energy-improvements/](http://www.cornerstonefund.org/churches/borrowing/mortgage-loans/energy-improvements/) helps finance energy-efficient renovations or construction projects on church buildings