

CLIMATE JUSTICE MONTH 2016

World Water Day to Earth Day

Over the last few months, Unitarian Universalists have been witnessing for climate justice from Paris to the Pacific Northwest to Washington, DC. Now people of faith and conscience have a chance to collectively take the momentum for climate justice to the next level, with the second Climate Justice Month!

From World Water Day (March 22) to Earth Day (April 22), we will build resistance to climate change and add our moral voices to the movement for climate justice, taking action in our families, communities, and congregations or faith groups.

How We Will Take Action

1. Every week of Climate Justice Month Commit2Respond will showcase a featured resource for inspiration, a featured resource for education, and a featured action.
2. In Week 1 we will act to [advance the rights of frontlines communities](#) by advocating for water rights. In Week 2 we will join the interfaith campaign to [shift to a low carbon future](#) and model for world leaders the strong action required from us all. And in Week 4 we will march, teach-in, and advocate for [reclaiming our democracy](#) from the likes of Big Oil and the Koch brothers, growing the movement for justice.
3. On or around Earth Day, we will hold worship services, Earth fairs, advocacy days, and much more, working with community organizations and fellow religious groups to grow the climate justice movement.

What To Do Now

1. [RSVP for Climate Justice Month](#) to receive extra inspiration and resources by email throughout the month.
2. **Spread the word!** Mobilize your congregation, faith group, secular group, family, or other groups you are a part of to take collective action together during Climate Justice Month ([get mobilization resources](#)).
3. **Get on the map:** If you are part of a congregation or faith group, do you have an Earth Day service or other event planned? [Register your event](#) with Unitarian Universalist Ministry for the Earth to get your congregation on the map, publicize your event, and win a \$50 gift certificate to inSpirit bookstore!

More Ways to Participate

1. Check out the [worship resources](#) from Climate Justice Month 2015, organized according to element and theme: water/rejoicing, fire/reckoning, air/reconnecting, and earth/committing.
2. Download the [full packet \(PDF\)](#) of daily messages, practices, and actions from Climate Justice Month 2015, designed to move participants through four stages on the way to making new commitments to climate justice.
3. Be a part of spiritual community for climate justice by sharing your own climate justice journey, resources, stories, and actions on the Commit2Respond [share forum](#) or on social media using the hashtag #commit2respond.

Thank you for all that you do to create a better world. Thank you for committing to respond to climate change!

WORLD WATER DAY: A LOVE AND LIBERATION PRAYER (CLIMATE JUSTICE MONTH, WEEK 1)

By Aly Tharp, Commit2Respond & Unitarian Universalist Young Adults for Climate Justice

Blessings and greetings on World Water Day and this beginning of Climate Justice Month 2016!

I write to you from an altar in the Radical Arts and Healing Space warehouse in New Orleans, Louisiana—by the time you read this, it will be 24 hours until the Federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management holds a lease sale for up to 43 million mineral acres to the oil and gas industry for fossil fuel extraction in the Gulf of Mexico.

I am gathered here with Jimmy Betts (fellow [UU Young Adults for Climate Justice](#) and Commit2Respond Communications & Resources team member) as well as people from Detroit, Washington DC, Alabama, Ohio, the San Francisco Bay Area, and, of course, New Orleans, to create beautiful artwork for a large civil protest of tomorrow's auction.

Get inspired: Look for updates about the big things happening today and tomorrow by following [@commit2respond](#), [@uuyacj](#), [@alytharp](#), [@jiseng](#), [@uusc](#), [#commit2respond](#), [#NoNewLeases](#), and [#WorldWaterDay](#) on Twitter.



After a 1,500 mile journey to New Orleans from Massachusetts, Jimmy (@jiseng) and I have just put some finishing touches on a thirty-foot banner that reads LOVE IS LIBERATION

From this altar I pray that we can reflect back on this day, one year from now, and find that our efforts have moved us into a more loving and liberated world. One where the Gulf of Mexico and shores of Alaska are not destined to be sacrifice zones to a carcinogenic way of life. One where there aren't thousands of communities in the USA with contaminated drinking water supplies, and the EPA does not send internal memos saying "Flint was not worth going out on a limb for." Flint, MI, is a predominately black, predominantly poor city. In a world built with justice, equity, and compassion in human relations—a world that recognizes that Black Lives Matter—such a memo could never exist.

Climate justice calls us to collectively rise up and above the gridlock, greed, and violence of this racist and classist society. If love is liberation, I pray then that love will guide our way. Today, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee has launched [a petition](#) calling on EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy to address the Flint water crisis and incorporate water justice into national and state-level Climate Action Plans.

Take action today: [sign the petition](#).

Do so knowing that these demands are aligned with the vision for Climate Justice articulated by leaders of frontline impacted communities such as those who created the Climate Justice

Alliance's [Our Power Plan](#). **Get educated:** Learn more about the meaning and pathway toward climate justice imperatives in the USA by reading this great resource.



The sacred waters altar in the Radical Arts and Healing Space warehouse in New Orleans

In closing, I leave you with this message for World Water Day from Chief Arvol Looking Horse of the Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota Nation, 19th Generation Keeper of the Sacred White Buffalo Calf Pipe:

"We are asking to open your heart and minds to this time of crisis that is now upon us, threatening a healthy life for our future generations and also for the many spirit lives of the four legged, winged ones, those that crawl and that swim who depend on Mni Wiconi, the water of life. Those that know how strong spiritual energy is, understand water is the most essential life-line to survival. It is a 'Source of Life' that is so powerful, that when we offer our energy of prayers, it can change into medicinal healing, through united intentions. Even science finally found this out only recently. Water carries the Keeper's energy and can change very fast. It can also bring death by not respecting its gift, especially when over abused as a Resource. It is time we wake up the World to stop abusing and destroying a gift of life—before it is too late." ([read the full message](#))

Thank you for opening your heart to this prayer and call for unity and action. [Thank you for taking action.](#)

The new Commit2Respond Communications & Resources team will be sending a weekly email to everyone who is part of Commit2Respond. If you haven't already RSVP'd for Climate Justice Month, [sign up](#) for additional resources and sources of inspiration throughout the month.

In the Spirit of Love and Faith,



Aly Tharp

Network Coordinator, UU Young Adults for Climate Justice
Chair, Commit2Respond Executive Team
Member, Commit2Respond Communications & Resources Team

THE POISONING OF AN AMERICAN CITY: A POEM

By Christopher D. Sims, DRUUMM, UU Environmental Justice Collaboratory, & Commit2Respond

As I walked through the Cleveland Heights Library and made my way to the magazine section, "The Poisoning Of An American City" on the cover of Time Magazine instantly caught my attention.

I knew what was going on. I had seen footage on the news of what happened right here on American soil. How could it happen? How could a governor allow this to happen to his own constituents? Aren't the mostly black citizens of Flint, MI people too?

I could not imagine this happening in the state I reside in. I couldn't imagine drinking poisoned water from the sink. But the citizens of Flint have. They've bathed in it just the same. Mothers and fathers have cleaned their children with poisoned water. Those children, many of them harmed by it, will be affected by it for years to come. Join me in demanding justice for the people of Flint: [sign the petition](#) to EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy.

As a human rights activist it is my duty to bring attention to atrocities such as this. I hope my words paint a clear picture of what has happened there and encourages you to take action if you haven't. As a Unitarian Universalist I believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every human being.

I believe in the inherent worth and dignity of the people of Flint, MI. Let this poem be evidence of that and encourage us to continue to fight for justice – especially for the right to have clean, drinkable water.

In peace and faith,
Christopher D. Sims
Member, Commit2Respond Communications & Resources Team

The Poisoning Of An American City

There's lead in the water; lead inside
the bodies of children. The governor of
Flint, Michigan is the villain - his own
citizens are the victims. He should be serving
time in a jail or a prison. They wonder why we
people of color point fingers at the system.
You have to ask, what were his intentions?!
When such an event like this happens, it defies
comprehension!

We need leaders with a heart and a vision
that all people should be treated equal.
In other countries this kind of action would
not even be conceivable. Even at first thought
it's unbelievable!

An American tragedy taking place right
here on our soil. It's torture and turmoil.
Enough to make one's temperature boil.

Why didn't he think about the youth?
Why didn't he put safe water to use?

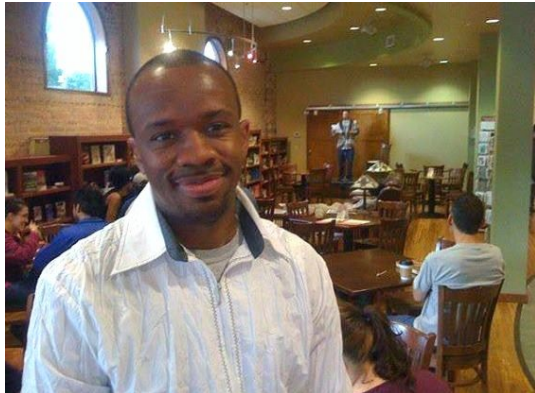
In a "post-racial" USA this is happening
right now, right here, today. This is environmental
racism and profits over people at play.

Is he or his family drinking poisoned water?
Would he let his own son or daughter?

Our country already has a dirty past,
why should it be a present day theme?

What an unjust, American, and amazing
thing! The Poisoning Of An American City
reads the front cover of Time Magazine.

© **Christopher D. Sims**
February 4, 2016



Christopher D. Sims is an internationally recognized poet, spoken word performer, and human rights activist. As a Unitarian Universalist lay leader, he serves on the steering committee for DRUUMM (Diverse, Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries), the UUA's Nominating Committee, the Green Sanctuary Advisory Board, and is a member of the UU Environmental Justice Collaboratory. You can read more of his social justice poems at christopherdsims.wordpress.com and listen to them at soundcloud.com/UniverSouLove.

RECLAIM OUR DEMOCRACY FROM BIG OIL (CLIMATE JUSTICE MONTH, WEEK 2)

By Irene Keim, Commit2Respond & Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth

Welcome to the second week of [Climate Justice Month 2016!](#)

“This is the first time in the history of the Earth that a generation of people has held the fate of the earth in our hands.” —Rev. Dr. Marilyn Sewell, [2016 UUMFE Earth Day Sermon](#)

What a powerful statement of our tasks at hand. Rev. Sewell’s words are deeply personal to me, because my home state Florida is already grappling with the impacts of sea level rise and extreme weather events. *We know that parts of the state will be under water in the coming decades*, and still our policymakers refuse to listen to the voters and act. Our democracy is broken.

Rev. Sewell proclaims, “Every citizen has the obligation to be part of the solution to global warming.”

Getting money out of politics could not be more urgent for me—the future of my home depends on it. It is no joke when we talk about seeing part of the state through glass bottom boats in the future. That is why I am asking you to join me in public witness to the problems of money in our elections and the weakening of our voting rights. **Take action: Join me and thousands of others for [Democracy Spring and Democracy Awakening](#).**

From April 2 through April 19, these two broad coalitions have joined together to empower action for voting rights and reclaim our democracy from the likes of Big Oil and the Koch brothers. Together we will march, sit-in, teach-in, rally, lobby, and grow the movement for change.

Rev. Sewell encourages, “Our strength and courage shine through when we join with a group of others, all with the same values, working for the same cause.”

[Sign up](#) to be a part of Democracy Spring and/or Democracy Awakening now, and/or [find an organizing hub near you](#).



You can also organize an event in your area and **get educated** using the films [Pay 2 Play: Democracy's High Stakes](#) and [Free For All: One Dude's Quest to Save our Elections](#). Both are highly acclaimed, fun films that are on point about the problems we are facing with our money overpowering our democracy and electoral system. Both offer viable solutions to prepare us for action with our policymakers.

Finally, **get inspired**: A special sermon by Rev. Sewell, written specifically for this year's Climate Justice Month and Earth Day, is available on the [Earth Day pages](#) from UU Ministry for Earth.

As a member of the new Commit2Respond Communications & Resources team, I give you my heartfelt thanks for participating in Climate Justice Month and the work of climate justice all year. If you haven't already RSVP'd, [sign up](#) for additional resources and sources of inspiration throughout the month.

In gratitude,



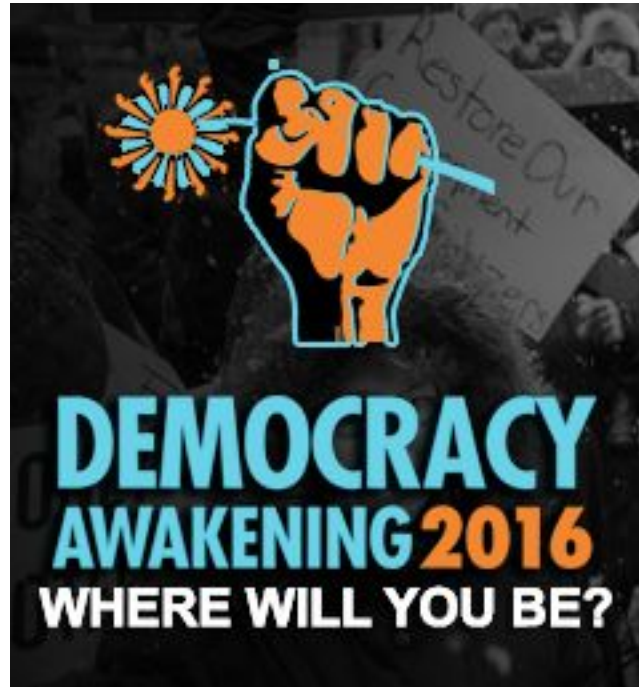
Irene Keim
Chair, UU Ministry for Earth
Member, Commit2Respond Executive Team
Member, Commit2Respond Communications & Resources Team

ACTION ALERT: DEMOCRACY SPRING & DEMOCRACY AWAKENING

By Lavona Grow, Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice in the National Capital Region

I hope you saw the powerful message from my friend and fellow Commit2Respond leader Irene Keim on Tuesday. If so, you know that one of the major actions of Climate Justice Month is reclaiming our democracy. As the chair of Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice in the National Capital Region ([UUSJ](#)), I'm helping to organize UU involvement in Democracy Spring and Democracy Awakening—will you join me?

UUSJ is teaming up with more than 200 organizations from a diverse array of movements, and hundreds of thousands of people are coming together to demand a democracy that works for all of us. Please join UUs and other people of faith from around the country in coming to DC for teach-ins, protest, advocacy, and direct action. It all starts this Saturday with a kick-off rally in Philadelphia for a march to DC, and culminates with a day of action on April 18. There are lots of ways to be involved and take action—whether or not you can make it to DC.



Sign Up!

- [Sign up for Democracy Spring](#) using this link set up especially for Unitarian Universalists.
- [Sign up for Democracy Awakening](#) by using this registration form set up especially for UUs as well. You can sign up to be a local volunteer as well. There will be opportunities for phone banking and more.

Schedule of Events

- **April 2**, 10am: Democracy Spring [kick-off rally](#) in Philadelphia.
- **April 2-11**: March from the Liberty Bell on Independence Mall in Philadelphia to Washington, DC. Check out the [route and the stops along the way](#) where support is needed.
- **April 11**: Marchers arrive in DC and [direct action sit-ins](#) begin that include risk of arrest through April 16. Over 2,000 people nationwide have already signed up to risk arrest.

Non-violent direct action and civil disobedience training will be provided to all who participate.

- **April 16:** All Souls Unitarian Church, Washington, DC is hosting the [Democracy Awakening Teach-In](#) which will include workshops, direct action training, and more.
- **April 17, 12:30pm:** Massive rally in front of the Capitol, followed by a march around Congress and a multi-faith service and rally at Union Station. UUs will gather at 12:30pm at 3rd Street NW in front of the Capitol with Standing on the Side of Love banners and shirts.
- **April 18:** [Congress of Conscience Day of Action](#), a day of advocacy, lobbying, and optional non-violent direct action.

Get on the Bus

- There are buses heading to Democracy Awakening from 18 different states! [Find a bus near you.](#)

Get or Provide Home Hospitality

- UUSJ is coordinating home hospitality. Email info@uusj.org or call 202-600-9132 for more information.

Join a Local Event

- Can't come to Washington? Find a Democracy Spring [regional organizing hub](#) near you—there are over 60 hubs throughout the entire United States! Reach out and get involved.

Thank you for your commitment!

In faith,



Lavona Grow

Chair, Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice in the National Capital Region

GROWING A GREEN SANCTUARY MOVEMENT (CLIMATE JUSTICE MONTH, WEEK 3)

By Rev. Karen Brammer, Green Sanctuary Program Manager

Twenty-five years ago a group of Unitarian Universalist leaders had a vision of our congregations living our values of interconnectedness and respect for the web of life. They formed the Seventh Principle Project, and in 1991 the [Green Sanctuary Program](#) was born, a program I am honored to manage today.



We've come a long way since then. Over 250 Accredited congregations and six revisions to the program later, I want you to know what Green Sanctuary is becoming.

Many misunderstand it as a curriculum or a static checklist of hurdles to “green” a church building. In fact, **it is a guide for an entire congregation to move toward environmental justice and sustainability, from the sanctuary to the kitchen and classrooms, and out into the larger community.**

The program challenges congregations to understand environmental degradation as inextricably linked to racial and economic injustice. It helps congregations build their capacity to act as reliable partners to those who are most impacted, instead of trying to “fix” problems that exist or “rescue” people at the front lines of our climate crisis.

Beyond one congregation working to get a certificate for their wall, this program empowers us to find the muscle to work together across congregations and faith communities. **This week's Climate Justice Month action is to sign the [Interfaith Climate Change Statement](#), calling for world leaders to ratify and implement the Paris Agreement for global climate action.** Green Sanctuary calls us to join together as part of a global interfaith community for climate justice.

Rather than a Green Sanctuary Program for separate congregations, I imagine a Green Sanctuary Movement, united through Commit2Respond. If that image excites you too, help me make it real, help grow it!

[Email me](#) to learn more about how your congregation can engage with the Green Sanctuary Program in new ways, or to join one of our brand new online Practitioners Networks for those who seek inspiration and connection with other UUs deepening their climate justice work both within and outside of congregations.



Take action: Add your voice to the [Interfaith Climate Change Statement](#) as an individual or congregation. The statement will be presented officially to the President of the UN General Assembly on April 18, 2016.

Get Inspired: Today is a [Global Day of Prayer for Climate Action](#), with leadership from Evangelical Christian climate

activists. Take time today to pray, light a chalice, [listen to a song](#), or whatever helps you feel connected to our interconnected web of life. To share your prayers or read prayers from others, check out or post on social media with the hashtag #Pray4Climate.

Get educated: Find out more about today's Green Sanctuary Program via our [online resources](#). If you are a member of a faith other than Unitarian Universalism, GreenFaith's [certification program](#) might be a good alternative for your faith community.

In Faith and For All Earth,



Rev. Karen Brammer
Green Sanctuary Program Manager

BUILDING PEOPLE'S COALITIONS (CLIMATE JUSTICE MONTH, WEEK 4)

by Paula Cole Jones, Racial & Social Justice Consultant, Joseph Priestley District in the Central Eastern Region, UUA

As we face the erosion of democracy and people's rights in this country, our principles call us to take part in building an enduring people's movement for justice.

This is Week Four of [Climate Justice Month](#) and soon we will celebrate Earth Day 2016. This week's actions are to show up for democracy and to learn more about building sustainable, winning people's coalitions. Climate Justice depends on our ability to act justly together: building connections between people, issues, groups and organizations to create a truly representative and sustainable democracy.



[Democracy Spring](#) began on April 2nd with a march to Washington, DC, from the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia. Thousands will take civil disobedience on the steps of our political Capital buildings this week.

I joined the movement at Union Station's Columbus Circle on Monday, as banners and signs were distributed and hoisted against the sky. Speakers took the stage and set the tone for an energized crowd.

Police escorts held back traffic as about 2,000 marchers took to the streets chanting --- "Campaign reform now! Protect voters' rights! Get big money out of politics!" --- to the steps of the United States Capital for the first of five days of sit-ins. Over [400 people were arrested](#) on day-one.

The US Supreme Court overlooks the steps where Monday's protest and arrests took place. Ironically, engraved on the building's face is an unfulfilled promise: "Equal Protection Under Law." Democracy Spring and Democracy Awakening are about demanding fair elections, protected by law, so that this promise can be fulfilled. We rise together to overcome laws and practices that strip people of fundamental voting rights and increase the power of corporations over communities, to the detriment of People and the Planet.

Get inspired: Listen to these two prophetic sermons preached by Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II at All Souls Church of Washington, DC, on Sunday March 6, 2016: [Standing in the Tradition of Moral Dissent](#) and [Bothered and Baptized by the Blood](#).

Get educated: Read [The Third Reconstruction: Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics, and the Rise of a New Justice Movement](#) by the Reverend Dr. William J. Barber II (Beacon Press, 2016). Rev. Dr. Barber II connects past and present struggles for forward movement of The People's rights and resulting backlashes from those who resisted full participation of all people in shaping our democracy.

Climate Justice requires that we are engaged in addressing the injustice of inequitable voice and representation in political decisions of our local communities, our nation and international agreements. We should all be studying Rev. Barber's book now. His stories and suggested "14 Steps Forward Together" will teach us how to build strong diverse coalitions.

Take action: *Get out to DC this week or take action [in your local area!](#)* There will be a Democracy Awakening [teach-in](#) at the All Souls Church on Saturday, the 16th -- which is also Democracy Spring's [Climate Justice Day](#).

Don't let this chance pass you by. Don't think that others will take care of it. We need to stand shoulder to shoulder with other marchers to renew our hope and identity as justice builders, and to recharge our batteries for the long haul, as the movement continues to build.

All of us are needed to say out loud and to show with resolve that this is our democracy, our country and we are not letting go of it!!!

Onward, In Faith,



Paula Cole Jones

Member, Commit2Respond Communications & Resources Team

Racial & Social Justice Consultant, Joseph Priestley District in the Central Eastern Region, UUA

Lifelong member, All Souls Church, Unitarian in Washington, DC

ACTION THROUGH POETRY (CLIMATE JUSTICE MONTH, WEEK 5)

By Christopher D. Sims, Commit2Respond Communications & Resources Team

As we recognize Climate Justice Month,
we must also realize, in no small size,
that April is also National Poetry Month.

This is a time for justice seeking, deep thinking,
calls to action, and interfaith collaborations reaching
across the UU sphere, and our nation.

We must continue to come together to march,
to fight, to protest, showing our collective might
for the sake of the planet and not take it for granted.
The Paris Agreement is just the beginning! Pretending
as if we are not in a state of emergency is condescending
to those of us who know the truth.

We must leave this planet in good shape for the youth!

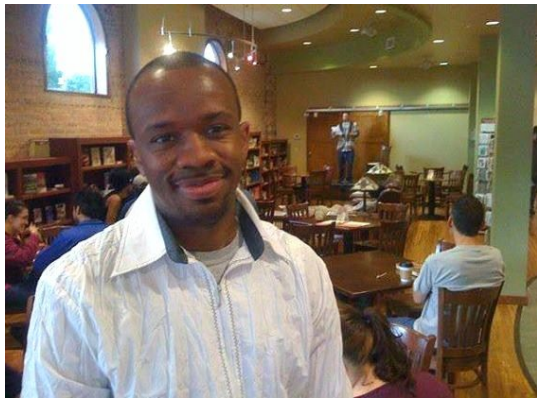
I write these words for activists and organizers;
for policymakers and politicians; for a cleaner
earth with a unified vision and a shared system
of responsibility.

This is spoken word for cleaner air, word warrior
poetry for cleaner forms of energy; poetry that
gives birth to revolution because the people need
hope and better solutions.

Where are you marching?
Where are you protesting?
Where is your passion?

I invite you to write a Climate Justice poem or a rhyme
then share it at the Commit2Respond website using it as poetic
form of direct action.

Let us pen poetry that packs a punch and celebrate
National Poetry Month!



Christopher D. Sims, Commit2Respond Communications & Resources Team

Get Inspired: Read, listen to, or write poetry this week. Find words that speak to your soul,
Make you feel whole,
Awake,
Connected.

Get Educated: In your poetic exploration and deepening practice, we recommend that you dig
into reflection on

[Generational Justice](#)

[Systemic Environmental Racism](#)

[Water & Society](#)

[Being the Change](#) / [Your Personal Journey](#)

Take Action: Let's covenant together. Share your words and/or your favorite poems. You can
also [RSVP](#) to join the *UU Young Adults for Climate Justice* for an online poetry reading and
discussion on Monday, April 25th, 5:00-7:00 PM Pacific / 8:00-10:00 PM Eastern (all are
welcome).

FAITH LEADERS PRESENT CLIMATE CHANGE PETITION TO UNITED NATIONS

On Monday, April 18, 2016, faith leaders convened at the Church Center for the UN to present the [Interfaith Climate Change Statement](#) with over 250 high level signatories, including The Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hahn and UUA President Peter Morales. In addition, over 5,500 individuals have signed on to the statement.



Interfaith Climate Change Statement to World Leaders presented by a young faith leader, surrounded by faith leaders to H.E. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the UN General Assembly at the UN Church Centre. Credit. Paul Hunt/ WCC

Cindy Davidson, a [GreenFaith](#) fellow and member of UU Ministry for Earth Board and First Parish in Lexington (MA), was at the ceremony and reflected:

“Each UN official who spoke expressed appreciation to the worldwide interfaith community and gave, in turn, his own “charge” to the interfaith community: “Continue your strong advocacy. Nothing should be taken for granted,” said one. “The faith community plays a critical role to change behaviors that contribute to climate change,” said another. Mogens Lykketoft, the President of the UN General Assembly, said he is “confident that we can and will succeed. In order to succeed, we need the faith community’s strong and sustained engagement.” Nobody minced words with the enormity of the challenge.”

The Interfaith Climate Change Statement to World Leaders (2016) outlines the positive judgement of the adopted [Paris Agreement](#) by religious leaders and faith communities and urges for prompt signature and ratification of the Agreement by governments so that it can come into force as soon as possible. It also insists that there is a significant increase in the current levels of ambition relating to emission reductions, financial flows, adaptation, loss and damage and a swift phase out of fossil fuel subsidies - so as to keep temperatures within reach of 1.5C.

The Statement also serves to renew the strong commitment of the faith community to remain active in defining the moral responsibility to care for the Earth and encourages its own communities to reduce emissions and to divest and reinvest in renewables.

In addition to global and national goals, the Interfaith Statement speaks to our goals for our own communities.

- Encourage faith communities to reduce emissions in their homes, workplaces and centers of worship and to support and stand in solidarity with communities already impacted by climate change; and
- Call for fossil fuel divestment and reinvestment in renewables and low carbon solutions, including within our own communities, and/or by engaging companies on climate change.

CELEBRATING EARTH DAY & CLIMATE JUSTICE THROUGH POETRY

Thank you to all who have participated in Climate Justice Month's week of poetry, and especially those who have shared their poetry! Please continue to join us in writing, sharing and discussing climate justice through poetry, whether through sharing something you've written yourself or a poem you find inspiring. Your comments will help inform the [poetry reading and conversation night](#) hosted by the *UU Young Adults for Climate Justice* on April 25th, 5:00-7:00 PM Pacific.

Here are two poems that were submitted to Commit2Respond by email that we would like to uplift:

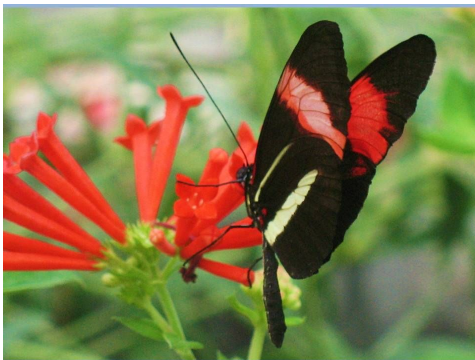
Our Earth by Paula Cole Jones

What are you doing for our Earth?
Are you concerned about her fate?
Are you quick to help take care of her
or do you often wait?



Do you pick up where it's needed
and throw your trash away?
Do you remember to act responsibly
each and every day?

Do you appreciate Earth's beauty
and learn what it's about?
Do you look around to see her gifts
each day when you go out?



Do you help to plan her gardens
so you're closer to what it means
to be a creature of this world
it's more wondrous than it seems.

To grow, and eat, and breathe the air
and drink water from rivers and streams,
to walk, and run, and also play
among browns and blues, and greens.



Do you think when the day is over
at the setting of the sun
that we must cherish the gift of life
on this Earth, our only one.



By Rev. Maria Cristina Vlassidis © April 19, 2016

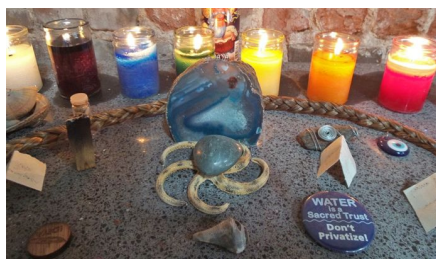
I remember
Araucaria trees
Andes mountains
Copihue flowers
Condor wings
Southern rivers
King crabs
Pacific ocean
Black clay
Red dust
I
Am
The
Mourning
Glory
The
Weeping
Willow
The
Hollow
Trunk
The
Damned
River
The
Flooded
Indigenous
Communities
Paying
The price
For
Lighting
The
Big
City
While
They live
In
The dark
While
They

Lose
Their
Homes
While
Their
Children
Die
Without
The
Blessing
Of
The
Shade
Of the
Pehuen
Tree
We remember
The green
Forests
The rushing
Rivers
The
Jumping sea bass
This
Is how
We lose
Our homes:
They forget.
Before
We
Were human
We were
Tree
Mountain
River
Flower
Llama
Condor
Ocean wave
Black clay
Red dust...
I remember.

A CELEBRATION AND PRAYER FOR EARTH DAY

“When we act alone, it is true that we feel powerless. Our strength and courage, though, shine out when we join with a group of others, all with the same values, working for the same cause.”
Rev. Marilyn Sewell, [The Moral Demands of Climate Change](#).

Earth Day is the culmination of the Commit2Respond Climate Justice Month, 2016. Looking at today’s actions and those taken over the past few weeks, it is clear that we have come together with strength and courage.



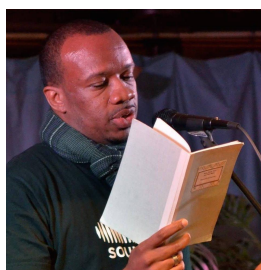
World Water Day began with a [Love and Liberation Prayer](#) that we may “reflect back on this day, one year from now, and find that our efforts have moved us into a more loving and liberated world” where safe and affordable water access is upheld as a human right. The UU Service Committee (UUSC) helped us bring this call for justice to the attention of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency with a petition that was delivered at an Inter-American Commission on Human Rights hearing.



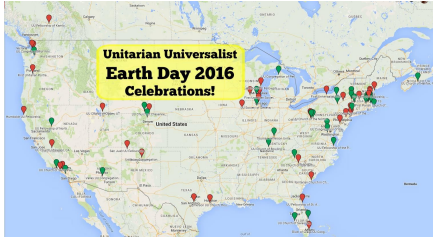
Thousands answered the call to participate in [Democracy Spring and Democracy Awakening](#) in early April, in the name of fair representation and voting rights in our democracy. Over 1,400 activists were arrested this month which prompted nearly 100 members of Congress to call for hearings on voting rights and campaign finance reform legislation.



UUs were present at the Church Center of the United Nations for the presentation of the [Interfaith Statement on Climate Change](#) to the President of the UN this week, which was signed by over 5,700 individuals, including UUA President Peter Morales. UU Cindy Davidson witnessed the ceremony, and wrote about it on the Commit2Respond [blog](#). We celebrate, as today Secretary of State John Kerry signed the [#ParisAgreement](#) with his granddaughter on his lap.



This week, a call for [Action through Poetry](#) encourages us to reflect and renew our covenant for climate justice in ways that honor our cultures, lived experiences and deepest selves. Check out the offerings, starting with one from spoken word poet Christopher Sims, [HERE](#) and add your own contribution.



We celebrate the many UUs across the United States who are engaged in Earth Day events, including worship services, workshops, community fairs, and climate justice actions. [Add your event](#), share your pictures, and join the contest for a gift certificate to the inSpirit Bookstore.

We uplift this **Earth Day Prayer** by Paula Cole Jones as an expression of gratitude for our connection to one another and the Earth:

by Paula Cole Jones, Racial & Social Justice Consultant, Joseph Priestley District in the Central Eastern Region, UUA



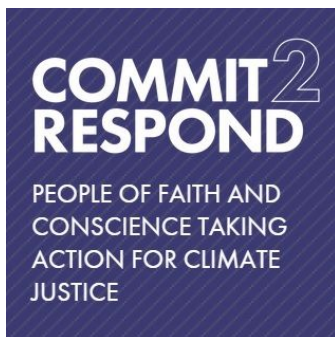
May we honor the Spirit of Life that flows through the ages and runs through all living things.

May we be enlivened with curiosity about the mystery and sustainability of our planet.

May we approach learning about, understanding, and appreciating this world as part of our daily bread.

May we find peace and connection with each other, with life and with the environment around us.

May we fall in love with aspects of this Earth over and over and over again, because we take care of who and what we love.



May it be so,
Amen, Ashe

All of the Commit2Respond Volunteers and Staff