

# RESOURCES FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE AT THE INTERSECTIONS OF CONGREGATIONAL LIFE 2024



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST  
MINISTRY FOR EARTH

*Respect Life. Restore Earth. Renew Spirit.*



**Climate &  
Congregational Life**

UU MINISTRY FOR EARTH

## Overview

Climate justice does not need to be a standalone effort done by a few people in the congregation. How do we bring our love for Earth, community and the future into all we do? The key is relationships. How is your climate justice team building relationships across the congregation - not to force an agenda, but to consider ways you can work together?

This video is part of UUA's Green Sanctuary 2030 programming. (Note: UUMFE does not manage Green Sanctuary, but we partner with the UUA to offer resources and amplify its importance in UU congregations.)

### Example

Watch this video where First UU Congregation of Ann Arbor (UUAA) describes the ways their congregation is being transformed as it includes climate justice across areas of congregational life.

First UU Congregation of Ann Arbor (UUAA) offers these tips to other congregations:

- A common vision. We already had a congregational vision in place. UUAA spent over a year involving as many congregants as possible in defining our priorities for what we do together as a congregation. A large percentage of congregants took part in the discussions and prioritization. At the end we identified: Climate Action, Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression and Radical Welcome as our 3 most urgent vision areas. While the outcome is not surprising, the process made everyone a co-creator of the vision. So we are not a climate group telling people we think climate is really important and they should do something. We can go to them knowing they already think climate is very important and help them figure out how to act on that. [We're making it sound too easy... but we think common vision is a huge factor.] There are congregations who have not/ would not/ could not go through a year+ long vision process, but some sort of full-congregation discussion/ buy-in would help enormously.
- Finding key individuals / brainstorming across groups. We had a number of Zoom meetings with representatives from different parts of the congregation (social justice, music, kids programming, etc.) who talked about what they thought climate goals should be and fun or exciting or important ways their part of the congregation might be able to engage with the issues. These were fun and very productive meetings, and they increased awareness and participation from these different parts of the congregation.
- Listening for the passion... and not worrying about the good ideas that got away. In our brainstorming sessions we might come up with ten terrific ideas. Then when it comes to figuring out who will lead on those ten things, some are snapped up, some taken on reluctantly and maybe never finished, some left to languish.



Best not to worry about that-- three great ideas implemented is terrific. Just don't worry about those possibly missed opportunities. Our Earth Day events were a good example of this. We had people who wanted to do an Art Show, someone specifically interested in pollinators, and a lot more happening. One person took on a task that we didn't expect him to get done. It showed up at the last minute and was wonderful. But lots of ideas stayed on the shelf for another day. (The super-enthused people wanting to build an on site composting bin discovered the resources weren't there to make it happen.)

- Encouraging groups to work together or broaden what they are doing can be a complicated task. Keeping communication straight is usually difficult. For example, we are now working on "zero waste". Our Food Justice Team is leading the project, the Climate Team participates in parts, the staff has to do a lot of the implementation, and every group that holds events needs to learn the new rules on what cups to use. But the job gets done, and in a way that lets many people feel they are playing a valuable role in the effort. Encouraging groups to work together also has a big upside. We often discover that combining forces makes volunteer recruitment less challenging. I'm sure we aren't the only congregation needing to re-energize post-pandemic.

We recommend:

- being open to flexibility in approach
- bringing a diversity of experience (including knowledge of the congregation and how to get things done within it)
- respecting each other
- having the willingness to support each other and the work (which sometimes means going the extra mile)
- focusing on the joy in doing the work and coming from the work

Thanks to [First UU Congregation of Ann Arbor \(UUAA\)](#) for this inspiration!

**Below are more resources to help you facilitate climate justice at the intersections of your congregation.**



## Worship and Music

Each month, UU Ministry for Earth publishes free worship resources, including music videos and suggestions. See all of our [Monthly Musings](#). You and your minister can use these in the month for which they're designed, or anytime! You can combine them with other theme-based ministries, too.



## Faith Formation

See UU Ministry for Earth's curriculum for all ages [here](#). We have shifted much of our curriculum to Padlet, which is a easy-to use platform so that your lessons can be accessed and viewed. Small Group Ministry and Adult Religious Education resources can be found in our [Monthly Musings](#). The word "musings" means deeply thoughtful. We hope these resources provide prompts for congregations to deepen thoughts and relationships around their love for Earth and community and around climate justice.

## Young Adults

Watch [this video](#) from our UU Young Adults for Climate Justice Coordinator, Zoë Johnston. She talks about how to involve young adults in your congregations. (This video is offered, again, by UUA's Green Sanctuary program. Much thanks to Rachel Myslivy for all the collaboration. UUMFE and the UUA work in tandem for climate justice.)

Do your young adults want to be in collaboration with other young adults across the UUA? Have them check out the [UU Young Adults for Climate Justice](#) or contact us at [uuyacj@uumfe.org](mailto:uuyacj@uumfe.org).

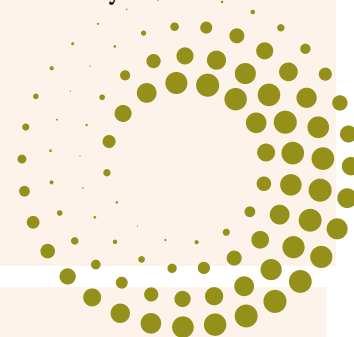


## Pastoral Care

UU Ministry for Earth's new curriculum, Spiritual Care for Climate Distress/Anxiety/Grief. Here are facilitation guides for:

- [A 2.5-hour workshop](#)
- [Four small group ministry sessions](#)
- [A worship service planning guide](#)

You can also find them on our website [here](#).



## Congregational Action

Be sure to check out [Green Sanctuary 2030: Mobilizing for Climate Justice \(UUA\)](#) supports congregations to take intersectional actions aligned with our Four Essentials for Climate Action: Justice, Congregational Transformation, Community Resilience, and Mitigation.