



Dear Faith Leader,

Welcome to the National Faith + Climate Forum 2025! Your participation signifies a shared commitment to care for creation, a desire to deepen your knowledge and faith, connect with peers in a meaningful pursuit, invigorate your congregation, and strengthen your local community. Your leadership to weave climate action into the fabric of our faith communities is invaluable at this critical juncture. As clergy and faith leaders, you embody the essential force driving climate solutions that address environmental challenges and champion creation care and community resilience.

Participating in this forum promises to:

- Equip you with insights from esteemed leaders at the intersection of faith and environmental stewardship.
- Inspire your congregation and explore practical ways to engage your house of worship in creation care through faith and climate programs, like the [Climate Ambassadors Training](#), [One Home One Future](#) Campaign, and [Blessed Tomorrow](#).
- Facilitate collaboration with a diverse network of local faith leaders committed to justice and creation care.
- Contribute to a collective vision that enhances our impact, driven by faith and compassion for the world.
- Strengthen your resolve for equitable and conscientious climate action, safeguarding our planet for all communities and future generations.

We are ready to answer the call to protect and heal the Earth. Your presence is a testament to the power of faith in action, and a promise to future generations that we will lead with hope, love, and relentless faith in our journey towards sustainability and justice.

Rev. Carol Devine
Director, Blessed Tomorrow

Ashley Lane
Director, Network Activation

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Meeting Guidelines

ecoAmerica + Blessed Tomorrow commitments to speakers and attendees:

- 1. Inclusion:** We seek to create brave spaces where all voices are included, heard, and respected. As a collaborative network, we extend compassion, acceptance, and respect to everyone in our community and advocate for inclusive policies and environments.
- 2. Diversity:** We acknowledge that people have different identities, backgrounds, and experiences, and we value the power of those differences. Our community is enriched by the diversity of our team, participants, and speakers, including queer, transgender, and intersex individuals, people of all races, ethnicities, abilities, economic statuses, marital statuses, housing statuses, ages, and backgrounds. We actively seek to create forums and activities that encourage and celebrate diverse participation.
- 3. Equity:** We embrace strategies and foster attitudes that ensure equitable access for all. We champion the voices of those marginalized or overlooked. We advocate for and work toward eliminating disparities experienced by populations subjected to systemic disadvantages through inequitable and discriminatory economic, social, and environmental influences.

These guidelines are designed to foster safe and constructive spaces for dialogue and exchange:

- Participate fully, actively, and constructively, be aware of the allotted time, and mindful to include fellow group members.
- Practice active listening (listen to understand both emotion and intent).
- Respectfully engage one another by asking questions and focusing on ideas, not people, if differences of opinions arise. Refrain from personal attacks.
- Accept the right to pass during any discussion. Each individual has this right and should respect each others' right as well.
- Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing (“I” instead of “they,” “we,” and “you”) and validating others' stories and experiences.
- Be conscious of body language + nonverbal responses — they are as impactful as words.
- Allow people to acknowledge, address, and learn from mistakes. Be kind in the process.

Agenda

**all times listed in ET*

12:00 pm **Welcome + Opening Prayer**

The forum will begin with an opening prayer and land acknowledgment, setting the stage for a day focused on climate action through faith. This session includes a welcome from Senator Rev. Raphael Warnock, an overview of goals, and important information to guide your participation.

Speakers: Rev. Carol Devine, *Director, Blessed Tomorrow;*
Senator Rev. Raphael Warnock, *U.S. Senator (D- GA)*

12:10 pm **Opening Keynote**

Join us for a compelling opening keynote from leaders in the faith community profoundly impacted by the recent LA fires. This session will delve into their moving story of resilience and hope, illuminating the challenges they faced and the strength they harnessed in the aftermath. Through their story, we have a sense of unity and determination, inspiring the faith community to undertake meaningful and compassionate climate action.

Speakers: Rt. Rev. Francine A. Brookins, Esq., *Presiding Prelate 5th Episcopal District, African Methodist Episcopal Church;* Rev. Dr. Miriam Burnett, *Supervisor of Missions 5th Episcopal District, African Methodist Episcopal Church*

Theological Grounding

*Those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;
they shall run and not be weary;
they shall walk and not faint.*

Isaiah 40:31

12:20 pm **Holding Space: Processing Eco-Grief Together**

Here we offer a reflective time to honor our collective grief. This session, led by an experienced facilitator will create space for participants to notice and honor spiritual and emotional responses in the midst of the climate crisis.

Speaker: Rev. Scott Hardin-Nieri, *Co-Minister, Green Chalice, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*

Reflection + Journaling Prompt: Eco-Grief

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12:30 pm **Healing Creation: Restoring Sacred Connections**

Reflect on our sacred relationship with creation through the story of the undamming of the Klamath River and the salmon who live there. Explore ways faith communities can lead in restoring ecosystems and biodiversity, reconnecting with the divine energy of the Earth.

Speaker: Frankie Myers, *Principal, Fix The World Consulting + Former Vice Chairman of the Yurok Tribe*

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Theological Grounding

But ask the animals, and they will teach you, the birds of the air, and they will tell you; ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you, and the fish of the sea will declare to you.

Job 12.7-10

*God led him around the Garden of Eden and said:
Look at My works! How beautiful and praiseworthy they are.*

Everything that I have created, I created for you.

*Take care not to damage and destroy My world,
for if you destroy it, there is no one to repair it after you.*

Midrash Kohelet Rabbah 7:13

1:10 pm **Pause and Refresh:** Musical Interlude

1:20 pm **Faith in Justice: Solidarity with Vulnerable Communities**

Champion climate justice by addressing the disproportionate impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations. Dive into the intersections of faith, justice, and advocacy to create equitable solutions.

Speakers: Rev. Heber Brown, *Executive Director, The Black Church Food Security Network*; Sarah Flint, *Creation Care Fellow, St. Peter's Episcopal Church + Blessed Tomorrow Climate Ambassador*

Reflection + Journaling Prompt: Faith in Justice

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Theological Grounding

*He has told you, O mortal, what is good,
and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love
kindness and to walk humbly with your God?*

Micah 6.8

2:00 pm **If God Were a Bear: A Reading with Paul Harbridge**

Explore a child's imaginative journey through nature with author Paul Harbridge as he reads his rhythmic meditation on the divine in every element of creation.

2:10 pm **Guided by Hope: Uplifting Youth as Catalysts for Renewal**

Young leaders are rising with clarity and purpose, showing us the path forward in addressing climate change in their churches. Their energy, passion, and vision remind us that we, too, have the innate wisdom to navigate these times and move toward healing and renewal. This session celebrates the leadership of youth in faith communities who are inspiring collective action and fostering hope for a better future.

Speakers: Daniel Mitchell, 2024 Green Chalice Justice and Creation Care Fellow, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); Lori Petrie, 2024 Ecojustice Fellow, The Episcopal Church; Elizabeth Simpson-Falck, 2024 Ecojustice Fellow, The Episcopal Church

Reflection + Journaling Prompt: Youth

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Theological Grounding

*Remember your leaders,
those who spoke to you the word of God.
Consider the outcome of their way of life,
and imitate their faith.*

Hebrews 13:7

2:30 pm **Pause and Refresh:** Musical Interlude

2:40 pm **Resilience in Action: Building Prepared Faith Communities**

Explore how faith communities can prepare for and respond to climate disasters. Learn from disaster response faith leaders on resilience and practical strategies for building community strength.

Speakers: Rev. Dr. John Frey, *Advisor, Green Chalice*; Rev. Caroline Hamilton-Arnold, *Associate Director for Domestic Disaster Response, Week of Compassion, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*

Disaster Preparedness Checklist

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Theological Grounding

*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the
mountains shake in the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and
foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult.*

Psalm 46: 1-3

3:20 pm

Strength in Unity: Partnering to Transform Communities

Discover how to build collaborative networks with other congregations and organizations, amplifying local climate action.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT: Grants are available to support your congregation's climate action. This funding is aimed at enhancing collaboration and partnerships in your local community, empowering faith-based organizations to make a significant impact on climate action. Don't miss this incredible opportunity!

Speakers: Huda Alkaff, *Founder + Director, Wisconsin Green Muslims*;
Dr. Eric Goplerud, *Co-Founder, Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions*;
Rev. Dr. Jean Wright, *Co-Founder, Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions*

Reflection + Journaling Prompt: Communities

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Getting Outside the Walls: Grant Application Guide

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Theological Grounding

There is no blame on those who believe and do good for what they had consumed before 'the prohibition', as long as they fear Allah, have faith, and do what is good; then they believe and act virtuously, then become fully mindful 'of Allah' and do righteous deeds.

For Allah loves the good-doers. (Abdul Haleem)

Al-Ma'idah: 93-94

Therefore we ought to support such people, so that we may become coworkers with the truth.

3 John 1:8

4:00 pm

Pause and Refresh: Musical Interlude

4:10 pm

Building Thriving Congregations: Foundations for Creation Care

Lay the groundwork for impactful climate action by fostering a culture of environmental stewardship within your congregation. This session provides practical strategies to establish or strengthen creation care teams, drawing on expert insights and real-world examples of successful initiatives.

Speakers: Kim Rahebi, *PhD Student, Texas Christian University*; Sharee Wharton, *Director of Education + Community Engagement, Potomac United Methodist Church*; Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin, *Chair of the Sustainability Subcommittee of the Social Justice Commission of the Conservative Movement*

How to Start a Green Team at Your Congregation
Congregational Green Assessment

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Theological Grounding

*The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,
the world, and those who live in it.*

Psalm 24.1

4:40 pm

Faith as Our Foundation: Stewarding Our Resources

Explore how religious communities live out their faith and reduce costs and environmental impacts through energy efficiency. This session will cover practical energy-saving measures and strategies for integrating sustainability into the life of your congregation. Faith leaders will provide actionable insights to help congregations lead by example in sustainable resource management.

Speakers: Rabbi Seth Goldstein, *Temple Beth Hatfiloh, Washington*; Daniel Gottlieb, *Board Member/Buildings and Grounds Committee, Temple Shir Shalom, Vermont*; Steve Vining, *Green Chalice Team Leader, Woodmont Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Tennessee*

Energy Efficiency Savings Worksheet for Congregations Page 37

Theological Grounding

Yours, O LORD, are the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and on the earth is yours; yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all. Riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all.

In your hand are power and might, and it is in your hand to
make great and to give strength to all.

1 Chronicles 29: 11-12

- 5:20 pm **Returning to the Source: Closing Keynote**
Closing and reflection. Reflecting on the Klamath salmon's journey and the innate wisdom of creation. This final session inspires participants to return to their communities with renewed purpose, ready to lead transformative climate action.
- 5:30 pm **Closing Song:** Sing Along to 'One Home One Future Hymn'

Praying by Mary Oliver

It doesn't have to be the blue iris, it could be weeds in a vacant lot, or a few small stones; just pay attention, then patch a few words together and don't try to make them elaborate, this isn't a contest but the doorway into thanks, and a silence in which another voice may speak.

Reflection + Journaling Prompt: Eco-Grief

Today, guided by an experienced facilitator, we will use a powerful visualization exercise “Circles of Care” to explore and honor the layers of our emotional and spiritual responses. We’ll begin by drawing concentric circles to represent our personal spheres of care, starting from our bodies and extending outward to encompass our connections to the wider world.

This exercise will help us recognize that even amidst climate-amplified disasters, our bodies have the remarkable capacity to hold diverse responses simultaneously. Even as we navigate pain and suffering, we’re also capable of experiencing joy—rooted in a deep love for our neighbors, both people and creatures, who share our environments. By connecting with our breath, we will explore these circles of care, noticing where we experience both gratitude and grief. ***Use the space below to draw your Circles of Care.***

Reflection Prompts:

- 1. Inner Circle Reflection:** Reflect on the feelings you noted in your closest circles—your body and immediate environment. What specific emotions surfaced about your personal experience with climate change?
- 2. Expanding Circle Reflection:** As your awareness extended to your family, community, and beyond, what changes did you notice in your emotional responses? How does the scale of gratitude or grief shift?
- 3. Intersections of Emotion:** Consider the overlap between circles, like a Venn diagram. Where does your experience of joy intersect with your grief? What does this tell you about your values + priorities in climate action?
- 4. Mind and Body Connection:** How did connecting to your breath affect your experience during this exercise? Discuss the relationship between your physical sensations and your emotional responses to the topics covered.

Journaling Prompts:

Describe your emotional journey during the session. What specific moments or discussions evoked a strong response in you? **Today, I felt...**

What brings you joy and gratitude? How do these aspects support your well-being and motivate you to continue to care for creation? **I am grateful for...**

Learning from Creation to Support Biodiversity

This guide helps congregations activate their faith by supporting biodiversity through restoring and rewilding local ecosystems. By working to correct imbalances in nature, communities enhance their local environments, support wildlife, and deepen their connection to God through the natural world.

Understanding Biodiversity

Biodiversity encompasses the variety of all living things on Earth—plants, animals, bacteria, and fungi—forming interdependent ecosystems. It enhances ecosystem productivity and resilience, helping them adapt to environmental changes.

Practical Steps to Support Biodiversity

1. Engage with Nature

- **Observation and Reflection:** Encourage your congregation to connect with nature. This could be through outdoor worship, nature walks, canoe trips, or camping.
- **Educational Workshops:** Host talks with ecologists or wildlife experts to learn about local species and their roles in the ecosystem.

2. Rewilding + Restoration

- **Gardens and Grounds:** Transform the grounds and gardens of your house of worship into havens for local wildlife by planting native plants, creating pollinator gardens, or establishing small ponds to attract amphibians and birds.
- **Vertical Gardens and Green Walls:** For urban congregations with limited space, consider installing vertical gardens or green walls that support native species and pollinators, or add container gardens.
- **Forest Restoration:** Participate in or organize tree planting drives to restore local forested areas, focusing on native tree species that support a wider range of local wildlife. Many states have grant programs available to help reforestation efforts.
- The [Arbor Day Foundation](#), the National Wildlife Federation's [Sacred Grounds Program](#), [Homegrown National Park](#), and [Wild Ones](#) have resources and support to help grow native plants.

- **Encourage Sustainable Land Use:** Educate the congregation on sustainable practices (e.g. reducing pesticide use, composting, and conserving water) to minimize your community's ecological footprint.

3. Assessing Local Needs

- **Survey Local Habitats:** Identify which local habitats (e.g. streams, parks, congregational lawns) are most in need of restoration or protection. Consider areas that have been degraded by development, pollution, or invasive species.
- **Community Input:** Engage in discussions about local biodiversity to identify concerns and interests related to wildlife and natural habitats. Reflect on any changes you've seen in wildlife numbers, is there more or less wildlife, or are they arriving at different times of the year?

4. Community Restoration Projects

- **Adopt-a-Park or Natural Area:** Partner with local parks or conservation organizations to adopt a section of a park or natural area. Engage in regular clean-ups, native plantings, and other restoration activities.
- **Connect Fragmented Habitats:** Work with local environmental groups to advocate for or restore wildlife corridors that connect fragmented habitats. This can help wildlife migrate more safely between areas, which is crucial for maintaining genetic diversity and ecosystem health.

5. Engagement and Education

- **Youth Involvement:** Involve children and youth groups in learning and caring for nature through hands-on activities like building birdhouses, starting seedlings, or participating in local citizen science projects. Visit [CitizenScience.Gov](https://www.citizen-science.gov) for local opportunities.
- **Community Workshops:** Offer regular workshops that focus on practical aspects of supporting biodiversity, such as how to compost, garden with native plants, or restore natural habitats.

Six Steps to Restore + Revitalize Local Ecosystems

This guide provides 6 actionable steps for congregations to enhance local ecosystems and promote biodiversity. By engaging in these practices, your community can support wildlife, reduce negative impacts, beautify your grounds, and deepen its commitment to stewarding the natural world. Each step is designed to be practical and impactful, contributing positively to both local environments and congregational life.

1. Shrink the Lawn

- **Purpose:** Reduce the ecological impact of lawns by replacing them with biodiverse, native plantings. Turf grass lawns often rely on pesticides, fertilizers, polluting machinery, and excessive water consumption for their maintenance. Meanwhile, they provide little to no food or habitat for native wildlife.
- **Action:** Assess your congregation's grounds to identify how much of the lawn can be transformed into areas that support local wildlife and ecosystems. The long-term goal is to convert at least 50% of the lawn space for ecological purposes, acknowledging that achieving this may take several years.

2. Remove Invasive Species

- **Purpose:** Combat the spread of invasive plants that undermine local biodiversity.
- **Action:** Identify and remove invasive species from your property, and educate your community about the importance of maintaining native habitats.

3. Plant Keystone (aka Native) Species

- **Purpose:** Enhance local ecosystems by reintroducing keystone plants, which are native species that play a crucial role in supporting diverse organisms, particularly in producing food that fuels insects.
- **Action:** Choose keystone plant species for new plantings to maximize biodiversity support. Refer to resources like the Homegrown [National Park Keystone Plant Guides](#) to choose species that are most beneficial for your area.

4. Create Soft Landings Under Trees

- **Purpose:** Support the lifecycle of native caterpillars and other insects that are vital to the ecosystem.
- **Action:** Replace lawn under trees with native ground covers and leave natural leaf litter, adding features like rocks and old tree stumps to enhance habitat complexity.

5. Leave the Leaves

- **Purpose:** Utilize fallen leaves as a natural resource that enhances soil fertility and provides essential habitat for wildlife.
- **Action:** Allow leaves to remain where they fall, incorporate them into garden beds, or use them to mulch around trees.

6. Reduce Nighttime Pollution

- **Purpose:** Minimize light pollution, which is a significant factor in the decline of nocturnal insect populations and migrating birds.
- **Action:** Evaluate and modify your congregation's outdoor lighting practices. Consider turning off lights when not necessary, installing motion sensor lights for security, and replacing white bulbs with yellow LED bulbs, which are less attractive to nocturnal insects and less disruptive to wildlife.

Starting a Pollinator Garden at Your Congregation: Step-by-Step Guide

Creating a pollinator garden at your house of worship is an effective way to support biodiversity, beautify your space, learn about pollinating insects, and engage your community in environmental stewardship. This guide provides simple steps to establish a garden that attracts and sustains bees, butterflies, and other pollinating insects, which are crucial for healthy ecosystems.

1. Plan Your Garden

- **Location:** Choose a sunny, sheltered spot on the grounds. Most pollinating plants need full sun for at least six hours a day.
- **Size:** Determine how large your garden can be based on the available space. Even a small plot or a few containers can be beneficial.
- **Soil Assessment:** Test the soil to check for drainage and nutrient levels. Amend the soil as needed to ensure it is fertile and well-draining.

2. Select the Right Plants

- **Native Species:** Opt for native plants that are more likely to thrive in your local climate and provide the best support for local pollinators.
- **Variety:** Include a mix of plants to ensure blooms throughout the growing season. This provides continuous food sources for different types of pollinators.
- **Consider Plant Structure:** Incorporate different plant heights and types (shrubs, trees, and flowers) to attract a variety of pollinators.

3. Design Your Garden Layout

- **Clusters:** Plant in clusters to create a "target-rich" environment that is easier for pollinators to find.
- **Paths:** Design paths for people to walk through or around the garden without harming the plants.
- **Accessibility:** Consider raised beds or container gardens for accessibility by all congregation members, including those with limited mobility.

4. Prepare + Plant

- **Soil Preparation:** Clear the area of weeds, loosen the soil, and mix in compost or other organic matter if needed.
- **Planting:** Plant your selections according to their specific depth and spacing requirements. Planting in the cooler parts of the day, such as early morning or late afternoon, helps prevent plant stress.

5. Maintain Your Garden

- **Watering:** Keep the soil consistently moist, especially during the first growing season to establish roots.
- **Mulching:** Apply a layer of mulch to conserve moisture, suppress weeds, and maintain soil temperature.
- **Avoid Chemicals:** Use natural pest control methods instead of chemical pesticides, which can harm pollinators.

6. Educate and Engage

- **Signage:** Install signs that explain the purpose of the pollinator garden and identify the native plants used.
- **Community Involvement:** Involve congregation members in the care and expansion of the garden. Organize workshops or days for planting and maintenance.
- **Youth Activities:** Use the garden as an educational tool for children's programs, teaching about pollinators, plants, and the importance of biodiversity.
- **Communicating Success:** Share updates and pictures in the congregation's newsletter and on social media to keep the community informed and engaged.

A pollinator garden is not only a haven for wildlife but also a place for the congregation to learn about and connect with nature. By following these steps, your faith community can create a vibrant, life-supporting space that contributes to local ecosystem health and provides a beautiful, sacred space for reflection and community gathering.

Reflection + Journaling Prompt: Faith in Justice

This session explores the crucial intersection of faith, justice, and advocacy, focusing on championing climate justice and addressing the disproportionate impacts of climate on vulnerable populations. ***Consider how you might integrate climate justice more deeply into your congregation's life through worship and educational activities. How will you carry forward the lessons from today into your ongoing efforts to champion climate justice and support vulnerable populations?***

Reflection Prompts:

- 1. Personal Connection:** How did the stories or examples shared by the speakers resonate with your personal experiences or beliefs? Reflect on any moments during the session that felt particularly impactful or enlightening.
- 2. Role of Faith:** Both speakers discussed the role of faith in advocating for climate justice. Reflect on how your own faith or moral convictions could guide you in supporting vulnerable communities. Are there specific teachings or aspects of your faith that motivate you to act? How might these teachings be integrated into your congregation's worship and education to deepen engagement with climate justice?
- 3. Intersections of Justice:** The session highlighted the intersections of faith, justice, and advocacy. Think about other intersecting issues (such as hunger, economic inequality, racism, or health disparities) that are compounded by the impacts of climate change. How can understanding these intersections better inform your actions or advocacy?
- 4. Steps Toward Solidarity:** What are practical steps you can take to support vulnerable communities? List specific actions you feel called to undertake, whether in your local community, through your place of worship, or within larger advocacy efforts.
- 5. Inspiration to Action:** Which insights from today's session inspired you to want to take action? How can you implement these insights in your daily life, house of worship, community, or professional role?

6. Long-Term Commitment: Reflect on how you can make a long-term commitment to supporting climate justice and vulnerable populations. What resources, networks, or groups could you join or start to keep engaged and informed?

Journaling Prompts:

Describe your emotional responses to the session. What moved you? What challenged you? **Today, I felt...**

Identify your motivations for engaging with the issues discussed today. What drives your commitment to climate justice? **I am motivated by...**

What steps you will take to engage your congregation in supporting climate justice and vulnerable communities. Consider the roles, resources, and unique strengths your congregation can leverage. **I commit to...**

Reflection + Journaling Prompt: Youth

This session celebrates the dynamic and pivotal role of young leaders in faith communities who are addressing climate change in their congregations with clarity, passion, and vision. Reflect on how these young leaders inspire and guide us, showing us that everyone has the innate wisdom to navigate these times and foster hope for a better future.

How will you use the lessons and inspirations from today to support youth-led initiatives and contribute to a hopeful, sustainable future? Reflect on how you can carry these insights forward in your ongoing climate justice efforts.

Reflection Prompts:

- 1. Youth Leadership Insights:** Reflect on any stories or examples the young leaders shared during the session. How did their actions and perspectives on climate change resonate with your own experiences or beliefs? Identify moments that felt particularly inspiring or eye-opening.
- 2. Energy and Passion:** Young leaders often bring a unique energy and passion to their advocacy. Reflect on how this energy influences the climate movement and consider how it might invigorate your congregation or personal efforts.
- 3. Hope and Healing:** Think about the connections between hope for a better future and climate advocacy, as reflected in the session. How can these concepts be integrated more deeply into your life and actions?
- 4. Collective Action:** Youth leadership often emphasizes the power of collective action. Brainstorm ways you can foster or participate in collective efforts to tackle climate change within your community.
- 5. Role of Faith Communities:** Reflect on the role your faith community can play in supporting young climate leaders. What actions can your community take to uplift and empower these voices?

Journaling Prompts:

What specific steps can our congregation take to engage and support young people in climate advocacy? Consider how introducing a summer internship program could provide both financial and spiritual support to youth. **I am inspired by...**

How do the contributions of younger generations inspire hope for our climate advocacy efforts? Reflect on the potential impact of empowering youth within your congregation. **I feel hopeful about...**

How can you commit to supporting youth leadership in climate action within your house of worship and community? **My commitment to renewal is...**

Disaster Preparedness Checklist

Preparing for a weather disaster is crucial for houses of worship to ensure the safety of their congregations and communities, and to protect their facilities. ***Below are 10 steps that you can take.***

A Spanish language version is available [here](#).



1. Form an Emergency Response Team

Establish a team to create and implement an emergency plan. Do your best to include members trained in first aid, emergency response, and crisis management, and those who are familiar with the physical layout of the property (it is recommended to record a video) and the location of shut-off valves or switches for water, gas, and electricity. Sign up for local emergency alerts for your city or town.



2. Create an Emergency Plan

Develop a comprehensive emergency plan for the disasters likely to occur in your area. Determine if the building can be used as an emergency shelter and/or point of distribution. Include procedures for securing the congregation, evacuation routes, and emergency contacts. Post the address, phone number, and emergency contacts by phone. Keep the Emergency Plan in an easy to find and well marked location.



3. Update Insurance and Backup Important Documents

Review your policy with your insurance agent and update it if needed. Ensure that all important documents are backed up, secured onsite, plus copies kept off site, including membership records, insurance and financial documents, historical documents, and legal papers.



4. Stock Emergency Supplies

Maintain a supply of easily accessible emergency items such as water, non-perishable food, flashlights, batteries, first aid kits, and blankets to support your congregation if there is a need to shelter in place. Be sure the fire extinguishers and defibrillators are in good working condition. Create a kit of items needed to hold worship services.



5. Evaluate and Secure Property

Strengthen your building. This may include updating drain systems, adding trees and permeable surfaces to prevent flooding, installing storm doors and shutters, securing loose items that could become projectiles, evaluating roof and foundation conditions, and fire safety.



6. Establish a Communication Plan

Set up reliable communication methods to contact members, especially those who are the most vulnerable, during and after a disaster. This could include social media, text message alerts, and a phone tree. Regularly update your congregation about the emergency plan. Encourage families to develop their own emergency plans. Connect with local leaders to receive information and offer support.



7. Partner with Local Authorities and Organizations

Collaborate with local leaders, emergency management services, other houses of worship, and community organizations. Join a network that can offer support during a disaster. Consider [Willing to Respond](#), a joint venture to help congregations work better together and connect with their local disaster response infrastructure.



8. Conduct Drills and Training

Create evacuation and shelter-in-place signs, and regularly schedule drills to practice the emergency plan with your congregation and response team. Organize training sessions on preparedness topics such as CPR, first aid, disaster response, and emotional wellbeing.



9. Review and Update the Plan Regularly

[Deepen your knowledge about climate change and the impacts.](#)

Update the church directory, including emergency contacts and notes about members who would need assistance in an emergency. Review and update the emergency plan annually to incorporate new insights and address any changes in your congregation or community's needs.



10. Support Emotional Wellbeing and Spiritual Resilience [Learn about the mental health impacts of climate change.](#)

Be proactive in supporting the mental health of congregational members, especially youth. Incorporate actions to support mental health into the life of the congregation and increase it as a priority during and after a disaster.

Reflection + Journaling Prompt: Disaster Preparedness

As disasters become more unpredictable and widespread, preparing for them is crucial for houses of worship to ensure the safety of their congregations, communities, and facilities. This session highlighted the need for robust preparedness strategies that address the realities of today's environmental challenges. ***Reflect on the insights gained and consider actionable steps to enhance your congregation's readiness and resilience.***

Reflection Prompts:

- 1. Your Role in Disaster Response:** Evaluate your potential role in disaster response within your community. What unique skills, resources, or capabilities can you contribute?
- 2. Establishing an Emergency Response Team:** If your congregation does not have an emergency response team, outline the steps to create one. Start by discussing the importance of disaster preparedness with clergy and the board, then recruit volunteers who can take on specific roles.
- 3. Caring for Human Needs:** Consider the basic human needs during a disaster (shelter, food, water, medication). How is your congregation prepared to meet these needs, and what improvements are necessary?
- 4. Supporting the Medically Vulnerable:** Identify the medically vulnerable individuals in your community. What specific plans are in place to ensure they receive necessary care during a disaster? Think about medication, power needs for medical devices, and accessibility issues.
- 5. Alternative Communication Methods:** If traditional communication lines (internet, cell service) are down, what alternative methods can your congregation use to stay connected?
- 6. Review Your Emergency Plan:** If you have an emergency response team and plan, review its details and assess current measures. When was it last updated? What disasters is it prepared for, and what gaps can you identify? How effective are the communication and evacuation procedures outlined?
- 7. Local Partnerships:** Reflect on the strength and scope of your partnerships with local groups and organizations. What additional partnerships might be necessary?

8. Supporting Emotional Wellbeing: Reflect on how your congregation addresses the emotional and spiritual impacts of climate change and disasters. What strategies are effective, and what might be enhanced?

Journaling Prompts:

What actions will you take to initiate discussions and form an emergency response team within your congregation? **I will support by...**

How can you and your fellow congregants reach out to members of your congregation who might need extra support during a disaster like elderly members, those with disabilities, or individuals living alone. **I can support by...**

How will you contribute to your congregation's disaster preparedness (e.g. volunteering for an emergency response team, participating in drills or ensuring communication plans are inclusive and effective)? **I commit to...**

Reflection + Journaling Prompt: Partnering to Transform Communities

This session highlighted how working together with other congregations and organizations can make a big difference in local climate action. Think about how you can use these ideas to connect with others in your community and start building partnerships that drive collective change. ***The prompts below will help you think about ways to get involved and make a plan.***

Reflection Prompts:

- 1. Understanding Collaboration:** Reflect on the discussions about building networks. Why do you think collaboration is so essential in addressing climate issues?
- 2. Current Engagement:** Think about your congregation's current involvement in community and religious networks. What roles does your congregation play, and how do these efforts contribute to local climate action?
- 3. Identifying Opportunities:** Consider potential partnerships within your local community. What organizations or groups could you collaborate with to strengthen your climate action efforts?
- 4. Overcoming Challenges:** Recall any obstacles you've encountered in previous collaborative efforts. How did you address these challenges, and what did you learn from those experiences?
- 5. Future Actions:** What's next for you in your climate action work? How can you take what you've learned today to enhance or expand your efforts?

Journaling Prompts:

List three groups or organizations in your local community that you could connect with to enhance local climate action. Describe the strengths each partner brings to a collaborative effort.

For each group you listed, imagine a specific project or event you could collaborate on. What would the goal of this partnership be, and how would it contribute to community-wide climate action?

Outline actionable steps you can take to initiate contact with these groups. Consider how you might present your ideas to them and what kind of initial meeting you could arrange to discuss potential collaborations.

Getting Outside the Walls: Grant Application Guide

Welcome to the guide for the Getting Outside the Walls grant, aimed at empowering congregations to lead impactful climate action. This resource will help you prepare and submit your application, ensuring that you meet the eligibility criteria and maximize your chances of securing funding for your community-focused climate initiatives. Let's get started.

Step 1: Confirm Eligibility

- Ensure your congregation is located in the United States.
- Projects must introduce a new component to existing work, explicitly focusing on new initiatives rather than extending ongoing projects.
- Verify that your project has a climate change or creation care focus.
- Confirm that your project involves collaboration between at least two congregations or one congregation and one or more other organizations.
- Check that at least one faith leader involved in the project attended the National Faith + Climate Forum on March 27, 2025.
- Prepare to provide evidence of matching monetary or in-kind contributions (such as venue provision, printing services, or volunteered time).

Step 2: Develop Your Project Proposal

- Clearly define the objectives and expected outcomes of your project. How will it empower your congregation and reduce barriers to climate action?
- Outline the scope of the project, including specific activities, target communities, and intended climate actions.
- Detail how the project will foster community engagement and awareness about climate and faith issues.
- Explain how the project will continue or build on collaborative relationships beyond its initial phase.
- Outline your matching contributions.

Step 3: Fill Out the Application Form

- Access the application form, which becomes **available on March 27, 2025**.
- Fill in all required fields accurately, ensuring that all information reflects the project's aims and logistical details.

- Attach all required supporting documents or provide links to online resources as part of your application.

Step 4: Review and Submit

- Before submitting, review your application thoroughly to ensure that all information is complete and accurate. Check for any errors or omissions that might impact the evaluation of your proposal.
- Submit the application by the **May 1, 2025 deadline**. You will receive a confirmation email once your application is received successfully.

Step 5: Notification and Planning for Project Implementation

- After submitting your application, expect notification **by June 1, 2025**. Use the waiting period to discuss further planning and preliminary steps with your project partners.
- Upon receiving the grant award, review the grant agreement and any conditions outlined by Blessed Tomorrow.
- Organize a kickoff meeting with all project partners to discuss the details of the grant award and plan the initial steps for project implementation.
- Publicly announce the grant award to your congregation and community to generate interest and gather additional support. This will help in rallying more stakeholders and resources around your project.

Application Opens

March 27, 2025

Submission Deadline

May 1, 2025

Notifications By

June 1, 2025

How to Start a Green Team at Your Congregation

Creating a Green Team within your congregation is a powerful way to foster environmental stewardship and engage your community in sustainable practices. This step-by-step guide provides practical advice to help you establish a successful team dedicated to implementing green initiatives.

- 1. Grounding in Faith:** What passages in your holy texts, or traditions of your faith call you to care for creation?
 - Connect with others who are concerned about climate change and want to do something.
 - Gain the support of the congregation's leadership including clergy, staff, and board leaders.
- 2. Recruit Team Members:** Build a diverse and committed team.
 - Announce the formation of the Green Team during services and via the congregation's communication channels (bulletins, emails, social media).
 - Encourage members of all ages and backgrounds to join to ensure a variety of perspectives and skills.
- 3. First Meeting:** Start with a prayer and a grounding passage of scripture.
 - Create a vision and mission of the Green Team that aligns with your congregation's and denomination's vision and mission.
 - Brainstorm ideas that the team can focus on, such as reducing waste, increasing energy efficiency, or promoting sustainable food choices.
 - Set short-term easy goals where there is energy and long-term goals that align with your congregation's values and capabilities.
 - Prepare a report outlining the purpose, goals, and potential benefits of the Green Team for the board. Request a budget or start-up funds to kickstart the initial projects.
 - Present the proposal during a church board or leadership meeting and secure formal endorsement and support.
- 4. Green Audit:** Examine how the congregation cares for creation in all aspects of its life.
 - Use the Congregational Green Assessment on page 31 and the [One Home One Future's Efficiency Checklist](#) to evaluate energy usage.

- Identify key areas where improvements can be made.
 - Document findings to track progress and prioritize initiatives.
- 5. Develop an Action Plan:** Create a detailed plan to achieve the team's goals.
- Based on the audit, list specific projects the Green Team will undertake, such as hosting an Earth Day worship service, installing programmable thermostats, or hosting educational workshops.
 - Assign responsibilities and set timelines for each project.
 - Determine necessary resources and partnerships that could enhance the projects.
- 6. Launch and Promote Green Initiatives:** Implement the action plan and raise awareness within the congregation.
- Communicate to generate excitement and participation.
 - Use church newsletters, bulletins, and announcements to keep the congregation informed about the Green Team's activities + successes.
 - Celebrate milestones to maintain enthusiasm and support for ongoing and future projects.
- 7. Monitor, Evaluate, and Adapt:** Ensure the effectiveness of the initiatives and make improvements.
- Regularly check the progress of each project against the goals set in the action plan. Let go of initiatives that don't have energy or support.
 - Solicit feedback from the congregation to evaluate the impact and reception of the initiatives.
 - Adjust plans as necessary to optimize outcomes and address new opportunities or challenges.
- 8. Foster Community and Faith-Based Engagement:** Extend the reach of your Green Team's efforts beyond your congregation.
- Collaborate with local environmental groups or other houses of worship to collaborate, share resources, and broaden impact.
 - Organize community events like clean-up days or eco-fairs to engage the broader community and promote environmental awareness.
 - Incorporate faith-based reflections and teachings that support the work of the Green Team, reinforcing the spiritual basis for environmental stewardship.

Congregational Green Assessment

This assessment is crafted to provide green teams with a detailed analysis of how your congregation integrates creation care into all aspects of community life. By examining practices across worship, education, spiritual, and pastoral care, buildings and grounds, community outreach, and justice and advocacy, you'll gain valuable insights to shape a strategic climate action plan and enhance your environmental stewardship.

Instructions:

- 1. Evaluation:** Utilize this tool to systematically assess your congregation's practices in key areas: worship, education, spiritual and pastoral care, buildings and grounds, community outreach, and justice and advocacy.
- 2. Rate Each Practice:** Assign a rating for each practice on a scale from 0 to 5, where 0 means no integration of the practice and 5 indicates full integration into congregation life.
- 3. Review + Plan:** Calculate the scores to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Use this data to discuss and prioritize actions for your strategic plan for climate action and creation care.

Area	Description	Rating
Worship: Ritualize creation in worship	Incorporates creation care themes into prayers, litanies, and sermons consistently.	
	Host special annual worship services like Tu BiShvat, Earth Day, and the Season of Creation.	
	Utilizes eco-friendly practices in worship (eco-palms, plants, flowers, candles, communion ware).	
	Features eco-celebrations and tips in bulletins, announcements, etc.	
	Regularly conducts worship services outdoors.	
	Incorporates elements of nature indoors, such as water features and natural imagery.	
	Worship Rating:	

<p>Education: Creation + climate are regularly studied</p>	Have trained Blessed Tomorrow Climate Ambassadors in the congregation.	
	Conducts book studies and educational series on creation care and climate issues.	
	Includes climate justice themes through guest speakers and sermon series.	
	Hosts events focused on climate awareness and creation care.	
	Actively participates in environmental advocacy efforts.	
	Involves children and youth in eco-centric programs like VBS, curriculum, field trips, gardening.	
	Promotes outdoor experiences like hikes, canoeing, biking, camping.	
	Education Rating:	
<p>Spiritual + Pastoral Care: Mental Impacts of Climate Change</p>	Raises awareness and provides resources and support around mental health impacts, including eco-grief from climate change.	
	Supports mental health needs related to climate (children and youth, climate anxiety, grief care).	
	Increases resilience by preparing for disaster event care for members.	
	Fosters relationships with neighbors, community leaders, and other congregations.	
	Hosts support groups for congregation and community.	
	Facilitates contemplative practices and worship experiences.	
	Encourages time spent in outdoor spiritual activities.	
	Spiritual + Pastoral Care Rating:	

Consumption: Sustainable and Ethical Practices	Reduces or eliminates the use of toxic substances in cleaning products, paints, carpets/rugs, deodorizers.	
	Buys coffee, tea, chocolate, and other products from fair trade sources, such as Equal Exchange.	
	Sources produce directly from local farmers to support the local economy and reduce transportation impacts.	
	Focuses on reducing single-use products, especially plastics, using compostable or recyclable items.	
	Advocates for reduced consumption levels, emphasizing digital over paper communications.	
	Offers vegetarian and vegan options at events and promotes meatless meals.	
	Consumption Rating:	
Buildings: Actions to lower dependence on coal, gas, oil	Completed an energy audit to identify opportunities for improvement and potential savings.	
	Implements building use policy around energy consumption for members and outside groups.	
	Reduces energy consumption (reminders, sensors, insulation, programmable thermostats).	
	Implements energy-saving actions (LED lights, Energy Star appliances, renewable energy).	
	Uses renewable energy or has taken steps toward wind, solar, geothermal energy.	
	Has a disaster preparedness plan in place.	
	Reviews disaster preparedness plan annually.	
	Has a recycling program.	
	Hosts a clothing closet.	
	Buildings Rating:	

Grounds: Support conservation and restoration	Hosts or participates in local farmers' markets.	
	Encourages cycling by installing bike racks.	
	Reduced lawn size and removed invasive plants.	
	Plants native plants and trees (protect and care, knowledge of, relationship to, additional plantings).	
	Implements a composting program for organic waste.	
	Eliminates the use of toxic chemicals in lawn and garden care.	
	Has a gardening program (vegetable, herbs, pollinator).	
	Implements systems to reduce water use and support natural water systems (watershed, rain barrels, water garden)	
	Supports animal husbandry (bees, chickens, goats) and Wildlife (pollinators, birds, etc).	
Grounds Rating:		
TOTAL RATING:		

Energy Efficiency Savings Worksheet for Congregations

In pursuing a greener congregation, think of energy savings as a snowball. Start with small, manageable steps like changing light bulbs or adjusting thermostats. These initial savings are not just a reduction in costs but an opportunity. **Use this worksheet to track these savings** and guide your next steps. **Then, reinvest the savings into the next level of energy efficiency measures**, continuously increasing your investment in sustainable and clean energy solutions.

STEP 1: Review and total the amount of your current energy bills.		
<i>*It's important to note not only the cost but also the consumption (in kilowatt-hours for electricity, therms for gas, gallons for water and fuel, and miles for airline trips) because prices can fluctuate. This will allow you to accurately track your savings and adjustments needed due to rate increases.</i>		
Baseline Annual Costs	Electric bill	\$ / kWh
	Gas bill	\$ / Therms
	Water and sewer bill	\$ / Gal
	Vehicle fuel	\$ / Gal
	Airline trips	\$ / Miles
	TOTAL COST	\$
STEP 2: Take quick, easy steps that save — target 30% energy savings.		
Conservation Savings <i>*Place signs to remind everyone to turn off lights and conserve energy. Studies have shown reminders can significantly reduce unnecessary energy use.</i>	Switch to LED Light Bulbs	\$
	Switch to programmable thermostats	\$
	Seal windows and doors to prevent drafts	\$
	Lower the temperature on your water heater	\$
	Upgrade to energy-efficient appliances	\$
	Install smart power strips	\$
	Opt for wise travel options (e.g., carpooling, teleconferencing)	\$
	Promote a meatless Monday or plant-based	\$

	meal day	
	Support local farmers/businesses	\$
	Use reusable cups, plates, and utensils for gatherings and events	\$
	Implement water-saving practices for landscaping (e.g. drip irrigation system)	\$
	TOTAL SAVINGS	\$

STEP 3: Invest savings into improvements—target 30% energy savings.

Building Improvements	Insulate	\$
	Plug air leaks with weather stripping and caulking	
	Upgrade to a more efficient HVAC system	\$
	Replace old windows with energy-efficient models	\$
	Install tankless water heaters	\$
	Implement lighting controls and automation	\$
	Upgrade to low-flow faucets and toilets	\$
	TOTAL INVESTMENT	\$

STEP 4: Make it yourself or buy clean energy from a utility.

Buy Clean Energy	Install wind or solar power systems	\$
	Purchase clean energy from utilities	\$
	Transition to electric vehicles	\$
	Install electric vehicle charging stations	\$
	Implement on-site composting or biogas solutions	\$
	TOTAL INVESTMENT	\$

Learn. Lead. Act.

Almost 70% of Americans are concerned about climate change, yet most think they're in the minority. As a person of faith, you can change that. The Blessed Tomorrow Ambassador Training empowers you to **lead on climate in your home, congregation, and community — with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to inspire action.**



Course options: Clergy, Spanish, ABCUSA, AME, DOC, ELCA, PCUSA, TEC, UCC & UMC.

Join a growing **community of 3,500+ Ambassadors nationwide.** Get expert support, tools, and resources to strengthen your impact.

Be the voice your community needs — sign up today!

blessedtomorrow.org/Take-The-Training/

Join Us!



Join congregations across the U.S. in **One Home One Future**, a multi-faith campaign to strengthen vitality, relevance, and local community connection across generations. Be part of this creation care initiative, whether you are just getting started or already engaging!

Join now to receive your free banner + resource kit with the QR code to the right.



Creation care has the power to strengthen your congregation with new energy and purpose. **One Home One Future** gives you access to free information, tools, and guidance, seven accessible pathways for action, and connection with congregations nationwide working to care for our shared home. [Learn more at OneHomeOneFuture.org](https://OneHomeOneFuture.org)



We Have a Common Calling

We have a common calling, O God of love and grace —
to care for your creation, to tend what you embrace.
We have one home, one future; we're not in this alone.
We're called to work together for this our common home.

You call us to be partners — to notice and to care;
you make us loving stewards of land and sea and air.
We see our climate changing; God, show us what to do
to care for your creation, to heal the earth with you.

We'll work to build strong leaders; we'll listen to our youth.
We'll strengthen congregations to help them speak the truth.
We'll work with other partners in our communities —
for moral, wise perspectives must shine in times like these.

We see our neighbors suffering — especially the poor —
and so we'll work toward justice and toward an earth restored.
We'll work as loving neighbors to plan and to prepare.
We'll allocate for climate; the earth deserves its share.

O God, as congregations, we don't act out of fear;
our moral obligations will motivate us here.
We seek a blest tomorrow; our voices rise above.
May we, today, be faithful in this great work of love.

Written by Carolyn Gillett inspired by One Home One Future

One Home One Future Resources

Session 1 — Holding Space: Processing Eco-Grief Together

- [Mental Health and Our Changing Climate: Children and Youth Report](#)
- [Mental Health and Climate Change page](#)

Session 2 — Healing Creation: Restoring Sacred Connections

- [Healthy Creation, Native Plants, and Community Gardens](#)
- [Climate, Food, and Faith](#)
- [Start a Community Garden page](#)

Session 3 — Faith in Justice: Solidarity with Vulnerable Communities

- [Intro to Climate Justice](#)
- [Seeking Climate Justice page](#)

Session 4 — Guided by Hope: Uplifting Youth as Catalysts for Renewal

- [Children & Youth Mental Health - A Guide for Faith Leaders](#)
- [Engage and Support Youth](#)

Session 5 — Resilience in Action: Building Prepared Faith Communities

- [Disaster Preparedness and Recovery page](#)

Session 6 — Strength in Unity: Partnering to Transform Communities

- [Getting Outside the Walls 2025 Grant Overview](#)
- [A Brief Guide to Organizing](#), OHOF x FACS
- [Organize a Community Initiative page](#)
- [Clergy Blessed Tomorrow Climate Ambassador Training](#)

Session 7 — Building Thriving Congregations: Foundations for Creation Care

- [Build Knowledge and Share page](#)

Session 8 — Faith as Our Foundation: Stewarding our Resources

- [Go Green, Save Green, Efficiency Checklist](#)
- [Go Green, Save Green page](#)