

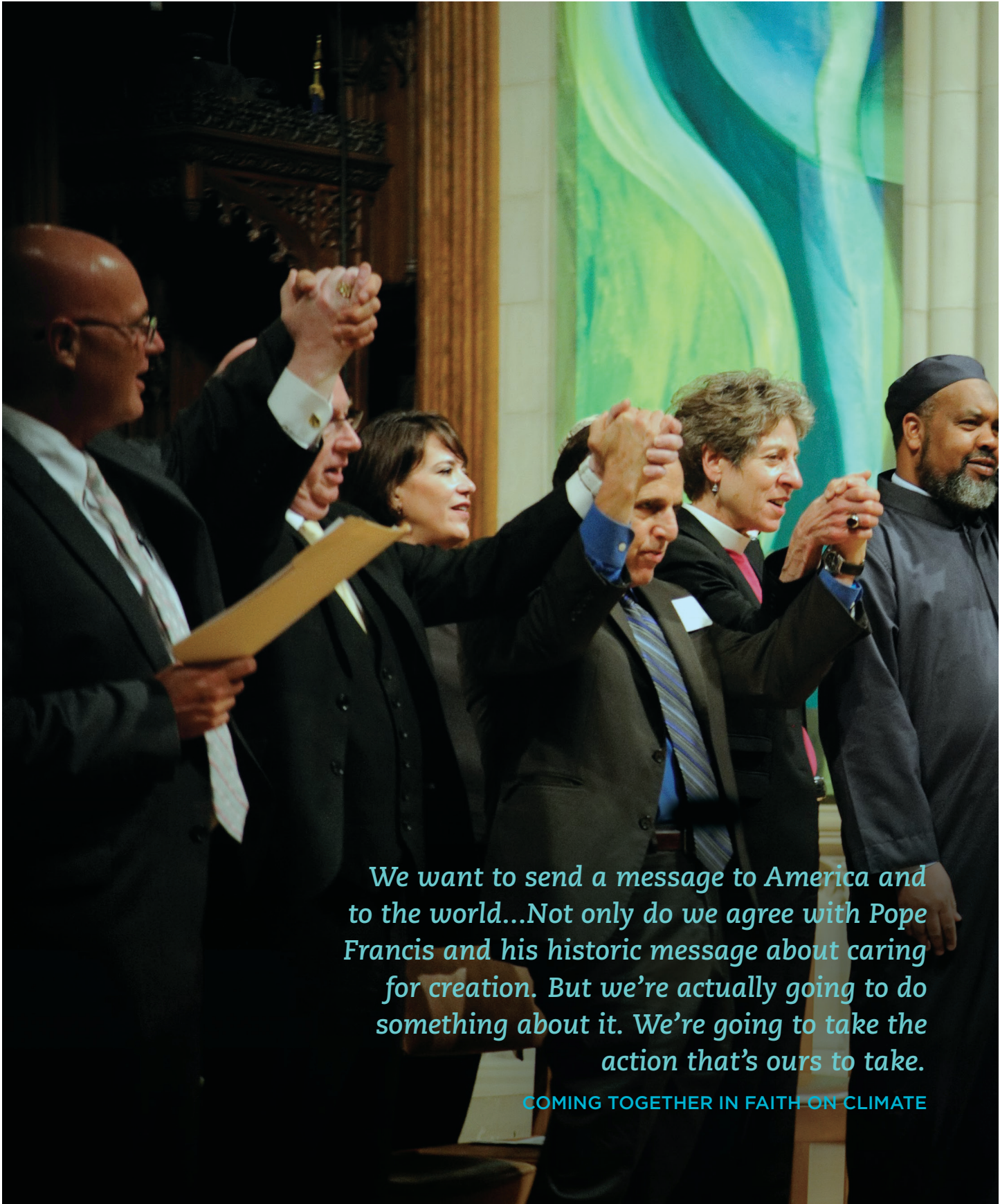
# Coming Together in faith on climate

*Religious Leaders Support and Extend the Pope's Call to Action.*

**CONVENING REPORT**  
NOVEMBER 24-25, 2015  
WASHINGTON, D.C.







*We want to send a message to America and to the world...Not only do we agree with Pope Francis and his historic message about caring for creation. But we're actually going to do something about it. We're going to take the action that's ours to take.*

COMING TOGETHER IN FAITH ON CLIMATE

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# PARTNERS, SPONSORS, AND THE 5 INITIATIVES

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*We agree with Pope Francis that we have a moral obligation to take action today on climate change and build a sustainable future for our children. Together we will lead by example on a path to a positive future and we will:*

**ENGAGE:**

Engage our congregations and communities for climate solutions. Blessed Tomorrow provides tools and resources to help: [blessedtomorrow.org/join](http://blessedtomorrow.org/join)

**ENERGIZE:**

Local groups will find great help here: [gwipl.org/go-green](http://gwipl.org/go-green), and nationally, here: [interfaithpowerandlight.org/about/state](http://interfaithpowerandlight.org/about/state). Form or join a clean energy group in our faith communities.

**EDUCATE:**

Stay informed and educate others. To help you do so, sign up for Common Good News for regular updates: [convergenceus.org/common-good-news.html](http://convergenceus.org/common-good-news.html)

**DIVEST/INVEST:**

Clean up our personal and congregational investments. Make your personal pledge at: [iDivestInvest.org](http://iDivestInvest.org)

**VOTE:**

Make climate one of our top three issues when (not if) we vote. We'll provide resources to help you learn which candidates are supporting climate change solutions, and which are ignoring or opposing them: [faithinpubliclife.org](http://faithinpubliclife.org)

**THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS AND SPONSORS:**



WASHINGTON  
NATIONAL CATHEDRAL





# INTRODUCTION

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Greetings,

Spirituality, faith, worship, praise, beliefs, witness, prayer, grace, religion, morals, divinity, salvation, communion, ecumenical, charity, poverty.... climate change. Climate change? How did climate change become a religious calling?

Professionals in various fields have come to realize that climate change is the biggest threat to public health, the biggest business risk and opportunity, a major security threat, and a resilience challenge to local communities. Climate change is changing our world.

But why faith? Why, with Pope Frances at the vanguard, are faith communities including the Presbyterian Church, United Methodist Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church, the United Church of Christ, the Disciples of Christ, the Greek Orthodox Church... Jewish communities, the Dalai Lama; and Islamic faith leaders nationally and globally are joining the call for action?

We understand that, as Pope Frances has said, “we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it.” That “exploitation of the planet has already exceeded acceptable limits, and we still have not solved the problem of poverty,” and that “doomsday predictions can no longer be met with irony or disdain.”

Climate change is fundamentally a moral challenge. Caring for creation is caring for our neighbors. We have a moral responsibility to the poor and vulnerable who bear the greatest consequences of climate change, yet are the least prepared to deal with it. We need a powerful moral voice to inspire and empower effective solutions, and people of faith are the only people who can provide that voice.

The time for prayer, the time for action, is now. Join all of the faith leaders who gathered at the Washington National Cathedral this past September to share their hearts and souls, and urge action to address climate change. Read their words here. Listen. Pray. Act.

As Pope Frances said “Yet all is not lost. Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start.”

Sincerely,



Bob Perkowitz, President, ecoAmerica



Brian McLaren, Author, Speaker, Activist and Public Theologian

*Blessed Tomorrow is a program created by a coalition of faith leaders in collaboration with ecoAmerica.*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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In a world with so much bad news, you can't take good news for granted.

That's why so many of us were thrilled when we heard three pieces of good news about Pope Francis—first, that he was writing a major encyclical about climate change, second, that he was following up that document with a visit to the United States, and third, that his visit would include an historic speech to Congress.

After so much bad news - about record high temperatures, about record high greenhouse gas levels in the atmosphere, about record-breaking storms - Pope Francis' courageous leadership came at just the right time.

A small group of us started wondering: could we pull together a multi-faith group of religious leaders to echo and amplify the Pope's message? Initial invitations went out, and we were amazed: every single religious leader we invited rearranged schedules to say yes. We formed a small organizing team with leaders from Washington National Cathedral, ecoAmerica/Blessed Tomorrow, Convergence, Auburn Seminary, Faith in Public Life, and Greater Washington Interfaith Power and Light. We planned a public gathering the evening of the Pope's speech to Congress (September 24, 2015), followed by a private gathering of faith-and-climate leaders the next day.

Key to our partnership was the realization that talk must lead to action. That's why we developed five initiatives (see p. 6) to help people not only say amen ... but also get activated. Because so many of America's top faith leaders said yes to our invitation for the public gathering, we had to limit each speaker to a mere four minutes, and each one filled those brief moments with wisdom and challenge, as you'll see in the pages that follow.

Rev. Gary Hall welcomed us and reminded us that we not only inhabit religious traditions rooted in the past; we also inhabit the earth, our shared home, right now in the present. Rabbi Steve Gutow wisely shifted the focus from what Pope Francis was doing to what each of us can do. Imam Mohammed Magid told a story about one little boy who made a difference, inspiring us all to do our part. Rev. John Dorhauer challenged religious leaders to rise to the occasion and demonstrate relevance. Rev. Sharon Watkins spoke with poetic sensitivity about how environmental concern is not just a matter of science, but is also a matter of the heart.

Rev. Geoff Tunnicliffe shared how growing numbers of people of faith are finding in the Bible a moral summons to care for creation. Rabbi Shosana Meira Friedman wrote and led a powerful song, whose refrain still stays with us: "The tide is rising and so are we!"

Sister Simone Campbell connected in an unforgettable way the dots between the social toxicity of racism and the chemical toxicity of pollution. Ambassador



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Ibrahim Rasool helped us see the earth not just as a creation of God, but also as a manifestation of God, deserving reverence and wonder. Rev. Suzii Paynter challenged us to pray barefoot and outdoors so that we would feel in our bodies our connection to God and God's beautiful world, and as Rev. Fred Small led us in singing "Tree of Life," the tree of life seemed to grow and spread its branches among us.

Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori invited us to feel our own breath, and in so doing to sense God's creation stirring in our own bodies, helping us realize that we are not apart from creation, but a part of it. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse told us stories about bumblebees stuck in a climate vice and pteropods whose tiny shells are being eaten away by acidifying oceans, eliciting compassion and resolve.

As Rev. Dr. Amy Butler read a letter to Pope Francis, her spirit of sincerity and commitment brought our evening toward a fitting conclusion. Bishop Mariann Budde led in a final prayer, taken from the Pope's Encyclical, sending us into the world in peace and dedication.

[Our Friday morning private gathering was equally rich.](#) It began with Rev. Joel Hunter leading an inspiring opening prayer and Rabbi Jonah Pesner presenting a powerful call to action. We watched the Pope address the United Nations, and discussed ways to work together more effectively in the future. Later in the morning, Rev. Dr. Katharine Rhodes Henderson led a panel that included Joelle Novey, Ebrahim Rasool, Rev. Dr. Susan Henry-Crowe, Rachel Lamb and Rev. Jim Wallis. Our gathering concluded with Melissa Rogers from the White House and an interactive conversation led by Bob Perkowitz from ecoAmerica. Rev. Stephanie Johnson and Rev. Jim Antal sent us out with a closing prayer and benediction.

[A few weeks after the event, a fellow environmental activist told me, "There's one voice in the world that is even more effective than the Pope's in convincing people about the reality of climate change and our need to act."](#) I couldn't imagine who that could be. "It's the earth itself, speaking to us in melting glaciers, rising sea levels, droughts and floods, and intensifying storms," he answered. "Even those who refuse to listen to our religious leaders won't be able to ignore the message the earth itself is sending us." The message from earth will not be silenced.

And neither will the voices of inspiring faith leaders like those who gathered in Washington, DC. [Now, each of us is invited to add our voices to theirs, sending good news of hope to everyone ... we can come together in faith on climate, and we can change for the better, with God's help!](#)

# REV. GARY HALL

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COMING TOGETHER  
IN FAITH & CELEBRATION  
THURSDAY, 9.24.15



Reverend Gary Hall

## WELCOME: GARY HALL

*“Those of us who follow Jesus and Moses and Mohammed and the Buddha inhabit not just traditions. We also dwell in a place and our shared place is the planet.”*

Good evening, I’m Gary Hall, the Dean of Washington National Cathedral and it is my great pleasure to welcome you all tonight to Coming Together in Faith on Climate. Religious leaders support and extend the Pope’s call to action. This event would not be possible were it not for real spirit of collaboration between and among all the sponsoring organizations. I want to extend my personal thanks to Ruth Fry, the cathedral’s director of programs for the work she has done on our behalf to work with our partners to bring this important evening together.

The poet Gary Snyder says ‘When you find your place where you are, practice starts.’

Those of us who follow Jesus and Moses and Mohammed and the Buddha inhabit not just traditions. We also dwell in a place and our shared place is the planet. Speaking for the Christian tradition, in our early attempts as Christians to differentiate ourselves, the church often built a false dichotomy between valuing human beings and honoring the creation. The environmental crises of the 20th and 21st centuries have demanded that theologians from all our traditions reassess our historic teachings and reassert our core beliefs about the sacredness of the world we share. The looming calamity of climate change which has already begun has not only intensified our need as people of faith to speak out on creation’s behalf. It has galvanized our desire to do so.

In his Encyclical, *Laudato Si* Pope Francis has issued a powerful challenge both to religious and secular leaders to see climate change as the theological issue it is, to mobilize, to reverse it on our behalf. All of us who gather tonight are deeply grateful for the Pope’s leadership and we have taken this occasion of his visit to America as the opportunity to come together to think, to pray, to organize and to act, to reverse global warming here and now. When you find your place where you are, practice starts. The planet is our place, we are the people. Tonight, our practice begins. Welcome to this work and welcome to the Cathedral.



# REV. DR. OTIS MOSS III & REV. BRIAN MCLAREN

## OPENING REMARKS: REV. DR. OTIS MOSS III

Welcome everyone. We are delighted that you are with us today, tonight, this evening. I'm Otis Moss III from Chicago, Illinois, but I'm just simply a father of Mackayla and Elijah Moss and husband of Monica and I just want to help prepare the next generation to give them a great gift. I'm delighted I have my friend, Brian McLaren, with us tonight. And we are here to celebrate what has happened in this country today as a result of Pope Francis giving such a beautiful, wonderful message to Congress, not only of hope but also of transformation. I also want to let everyone know who's here today, who's joining us virtually, that you also can use on a hashtag: #faithandclimate. Whether you're with us via Twitter, whether you're with us via Facebook, Instagram, or Snapchat. If you don't know anything that I'm talking about just send a letter to somebody, that'll be fine. We are delighted that you are with us today, this evening, for this great event.

COMING TOGETHER  
IN FAITH & CELEBRATION  
THURSDAY, 9.24.15



Reverend Dr. Otis Moss III  
Trinity United Church of Christ,  
Chicago, IL

## OPENING REMARKS: REV. BRIAN MCLAREN

We are so thrilled that we have all come together. We are so thrilled with the speakers who you're going to hear from this evening. We're so thrilled about the challenge and inspiration you're going to receive. That's why just to make sure we focus on really important issues. Our speakers will be giving very short messages to you and we're going to forgo the formal introductions that they all deserve and we're just going to let them introduce themselves so we really can focus on the essence of our content together. I would like to invite you all to stand with me now as Rabbi Steve Gutow leads us in an opening prayer



Reverend Brian McLaren  
Author, blogger, speaker, and  
activist in the faith and climate  
movement.

# RABBI STEVE GUTOW

COMING TOGETHER  
IN FAITH & CELEBRATION  
THURSDAY, 9.24.15



Reverend Steve Gutow  
President of the Jewish Council  
for Public Affairs

## OPENING PRAYER: RABBI STEVE GUTOW

We gather here tonight at the National Cathedral in our nation's capital on this momentous evening to pray for the success of the great work being done by a great Pope. This man of god is committed to preventing the proliferation of carbon in our atmosphere and, as importantly, to the cause of protecting the poor and vulnerable from the debilitating impact of this carbon on their lives. It is altogether fitting that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we cannot only pray for the work of Francis. We too, each of us, has the responsibility to do our part to stop the dangerous spread of climate change across this planet. There is a story from the Talmud which will help us understand the prayer I am about to utter. It is about a great sage named Zusia. He met with his students. His eyes welled up in tears and his face was white in great trepidation. "Zusia, they asked, what's wrong? Why do you look so upset?" He answered, 'I had a dream. I learned what the angels will eventually ask me about my life here on Earth.' The followers appeared shocked "Zusia, they said, you are pious; you are a great teacher, a very humble man. We have all learned from your lessons and your very presence. What question about your life could cause you such fear? "

Zusia looked upward and said, "I have learned that the angels will not ask me, 'Why weren't you a Moses, leading your people from slavery?'" His students looked at him "So, what will they ask you?" Zusia was in fear and said, "They will not ask me, 'Why weren't you a Joshua, leading your people to the promised land?'" One of his acolytes approached Zusia and placed his hands softly on Zusia's shoulders. Looking at him directly with love in his eyes, the follower asked pleadingly, "What will they ask you?" "They will say to me, 'Zusia, there was only one thing that no power of heaven or earth could have prevented you from becoming.' They will say, 'Zusia, why weren't you the best Zusia you could possibly have been?'"

With Zusia in mind, Let us pray: *'Dearest Creator of the Universe—thank you for bringing us together tonight to consider our responsibilities to protect your Earth and your people. We praise you for the gift of Pope Francis who has led all of us in loving your planet and in pointing us towards worrying about the most vulnerable of its inhabitants We know that many in your world live in pain caused by our indifference and our greed. Please give us the strength to be more concerned about our neighbors than we are concerned about ourselves. We ask you to help each one of us discern the right path as we do our part to prevent the destruction of this Earth and of your people. Help us to do all you believe we possibly can do so we will not fear so much the question that Zusia feared. We ask humbly for your love and your divine support as we march forward in the days and years to come. We close our eyes and end this prayer in the way that we each believe will enable it to stretch out from our hearts to your heart. And we all say: Amen We know you will not ask us to be Pope Francis but we can follow in his footsteps. Help us to do all that you believe that we can possibly do so we will not have to fear answering the question that caused Zusia such trepidation. We ask humbly for your love and your divine support as we march forward in the days and years to come. Let us all close our eyes, be full of quiet humility and end this prayer in the way we each believe will enable it to stretch out from our hearts to your heart. So everyone please pause quietly for just a moment. Let us open our eyes and let us all say together, 'Amen.'*



# IMAM MOHAMED MAGID

## CLIMATE CHANGE IS REAL, SO IS OUR COMMITMENT

*“Climate change requires change in behavior. Let’s do it. Let us preach, let us teach, let us leave a world for our children better than the world we found it and remember God will not change the condition of people unless they change the condition of themselves.”*

Good evening. My name is Mohamed Magid. I’m the imam of All Dulles Area Muslim Society Center. And also, I’m the chairman of International Interfaith Peace Corps. Brothers and sisters in faith, we are gathered here today to address a very important issue. The issue of our time. Climate change is real and so our commitment to change must be real. The Holy Quran says corruption has appeared in the land and the sea because what we might have done with their own hand. To stop this pollution and this corruption, it requires a change of behavior says in Holy Quran. God does not change the conditions of people unless they change the condition of themselves.

Muslim communities in the United States have taken this call by God very seriously. And they have called for green mosques across United States. I know my mosque at A.D.A.M. Center has joined the call and started a green movement in our mosque. A young man came to us last Ramadan. Ramadan is the month of fasting and it was in the summer by the way. We fast long hours. Every night we provided a bottle of water, plastic bottle of water, disposable one, for people to use, to address their thirst. This young man made his calculation, he said, we had used 125,000 bottles of waters last year. We should teach our community to use reusable bottle of water this Ramadan.

And it happened. That congregation that came every night, 100s of them, they used reusable bottled water. Imagine if a young person can make that difference and change the behavior of an entire congregation. What more than 4 billion people can do in the planet Earth. People who believe in God from Christians to Muslims to Jews and Hindus and Buddhists. If they say we will respond to the call of the Pope and we’ll make a difference in our community and we’ll make the right decisions in our congregation and our place of worship, in our homes and our place of work. You’ll see that change has taken place. Climate change requires change in behavior. Let’s do it. Let us preach, let us teach, let us leave a world for our children better than the world we found it and remember God will not change the condition of people unless they change the condition of themselves. Thank you.

COMING TOGETHER  
IN FAITH & CELEBRATION  
THURSDAY, 9.24.15



*Imam Mohamed Magid*  
All Dulles Area Muslim Society  
Center

# REV. JOHN C. DORHAUER

COMING TOGETHER  
IN FAITH & CELEBRATION  
THURSDAY, 9.24.15



Reverend John C. Dorhauer  
United Church of Christ

## FAITH COMMUNITIES LEADING THE WAY

*“We...must unite in a single movement and a common cause. We must as one inspire humankind to live differently or the earth will die and cast us all aside.”*

Good evening. I’m John Dorhauer, newly elected general minister and president of the United Church of Christ. It is an honor to be here with friends of our Earth, whose sacred texts all remind us how precious is the work of the Creator. No god we have imagined, no divine being with which we have communed, can or would tolerate what our hands have wrought from the goodness she fashioned. All things that we claim to be true on behalf of the gods we worship have no meaning, have no value, have no purpose unless and until they unite in common cause to restore health to our beloved Mother Earth.

We find ourselves, all of us, engaged in open debate about the relevance of our respective faiths, of the value of our rich traditions and rituals, and of the authenticity of our theological suppositions. Many wonder if there is any relevancy left to religion itself. They are not wrong to ask. If our collective call to goodness cannot conspire to heal our planet, our reasons for being are called into question. There is a word from our sacred writings, recorded in the words of a prophet known as Amos. He speaks with what we hear as the voice of our creator saying to those assembled for worship:

*I hate, I despise your festivals,  
and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.  
Take away from me the noise of your songs;  
I will not listen to the melody of your harps.  
But let justice roll down like waters,  
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.*

I hear this as a word for our time, expressed if not now with the voice of our creator then with the voice of our detractors who see our attention to ritual, tradition, and orthodoxy as meaningless when they are not accompanied with the kind of action that makes for justice; or worse, when they are offered in exchange for the actions that make for justice. Our precious planet is dying. Whatever has before kept us apart must now be cast aside. We who broker in hope, who stay attuned to the voice and movement of the sacred among us, who find light in the darkness must unite a single movement and a common cause. We must as one inspire humankind to live differently. Or the Earth will die, casting us all aside. And those who saw as irrelevant will have won a Pyrrhic victory.

We can do this. One year ago today, \$50 billion was divested from fossil fuel companies; today that figure stands at \$2.6 trillion. 4 years ago 1,200 faith leaders were arrested for opposing a KXL pipeline that President Obama has yet to take action against. Our voice matters. We can do this. If we harness the collective agency of our religious movements, we can literally move the Earth. Let us all stand in solidarity, all people of faith, united for the preservation of the Earth and the bounty and beauty it was created to sustain.



# REV. SHARON WATKINS

## A CALL TO CLERGY AND LAITY

*“Creation waits for us to join together, to preserve our God-given planetary home.”*

My name is Sharon Watkins. I serve as General Minister and President of a historic Protestant denomination called the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

I look out over the Congo River. Underneath its languid surface a world teems with life. The big fish Capitaine for eating, animals plants and microbes. (Some of them for eating us!)

On the porch of this Mbandaka home, guests of Congolese church, partners of over a century, I am, for a moment, calmed by the river’s constant flow.

The equatorial forests surrounding me faithfully breathes in the carbon dioxide waste of human production and breathes out life-giving oxygen. In my line of vision, mango trees are heavy with fruit, kissing the ground. They bring to mind Eden.

A scrap of scripture floats through my memory from Paul’s letter to the Romans. “All of creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God.”

All of creation waits. The forest, lungs of the earth; the birds of the air and the fish of the sea; human neighbors, local and global.

All of creation waits for us —laity, clergy, women, men— to step up, to reveal our true identity as the children of God.

Creation waits for us to join together, to preserve our God-given, planetary home.

Thank you Pope Francis for urging us—the whole human family together—to answer creation’s longing.

Brothers and sisters, how long must creation wait?

COMING TOGETHER  
IN FAITH & CELEBRATION  
THURSDAY, 9.24.15



*Reverend Sharon Watkins  
Christian Church Disciples  
of Christ*

# REV. DR. GEOFF TUNNICLIFFE

COMING TOGETHER  
IN FAITH & CELEBRATION  
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Reverend Dr. Geoff Tunnicliffe  
United Church of Christ

## EVANGELICAL PASSION AND CLIMATE CHANGE SOLUTIONS

*“We also recognize that men, women, and children created in God’s image have a unique responsibility for creation. Our actions should sustain creation’s fruitfulness and its powerful testimony to its creator.”*

Good evening, my name is Geoff Tunnicliffe and I’m from Vancouver, Canada. Over the last several years evangelicals have issued powerful statements on our concern for creation. The Micah Network, the Lausanne Movement and the World Evangelical Alliance. It was during my 10 years as the Secretary General of the World Evangelical Alliance that we issued a powerful statement, I believe, on creation care. Representing the 600 million evangelicals in our movement across the world, it was unanimously approved by our general assembly, unanimous. So it’s from that document I will draw my comments tonight.

Psalm 24: verse 1, says, ‘the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof.’ As followers of Jesus Christ committed to the full authority of scriptures and aware of the ways we have degraded creation, we believe that biblical faith is essential to the solution of our ecological problems. Because we worship and honor the creator, we seek to cherish and care for creation. Because, we have sinned, we have failed in our stewardship of creation, therefore we repent of the way we have polluted, distorted, or destroyed so much of the creator’s work. Because of our relationship to God, it’s closely tied to our relationship with the lands we inhabit. We commit ourselves to working for ecological and social peace and prosperity of the places to which God has called us.

Because in Christ, God has healed our alienation from God and extended to us the first roots of the reconciliation of all things. We commit ourselves to the working and the power of the Holy Spirit to share the good news of Christ in word and deed. To the work of reconciliation of all people in Christ and to extend Christ’s healing of the suffering creation. We await the time when even the groaning creation will be restored to wholeness. We commit ourselves to work vigorously to protect and heal that creation for the honor and glory of the creator. And we know dimly through creation, but we need fully through scriptures and in Christ.

We recognize that our children face a growing crisis in the health of creation in which we are embedded and through which, by God’s grace we are sustained. Yet we continue to degrade that creation. We recognize that it is the very poorest in the world who are suffering the most from the effects of environmental degradation, yet they did the least to cause it. We recognize that many concerned people convinced that environmental problems are more spiritual than technological ... are exploring the world’s ideologies and religions in search of spiritual resources for the healing of the earth.

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We also recognize that men, women, and children created in God's image have a unique responsibility for creation. Our actions should sustain creation's fruitfulness and the powerful testimony to its creator. However too often we have ignored our creaturely limits and have used the earth with greed rather than care. We believe that in Christ there is hope, not only for men, women and children, but also for the rest of creation that is suffering from the consequences of human sin. Therefore we call upon all Christians to reaffirm that all of creation is God's. That God's creation is good and that God is renewing it in Christ. So we call upon all Christians to listen and work with all those who are concerned about the healing of creation. With an eagerness to both learn from them but also to share with *them* our conviction that God, *whom all people sense in creation*, is known, fully only in the word made flesh in Christ, the living God who made this and sustains all things.

And finally we make this declaration knowing that until Christ returns to reconcile all things, we are called to be faithful stewards of God's good garden, our earthly home. To make this a reality we need transformational leadership, the kind of leadership that Pope Francis is demonstrating in his commitment to this. May God help us to do that.





# RABBI SHOSHANA MEIRA FREIDMAN & REV. FRED SMALL

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COMING TOGETHER  
IN FAITH & CELEBRATION  
THURSDAY, 9.24.15



Rabbi Shoshana Meira Friedman

## THE TIDE IS RISING

Rabbi Shoshana Meira Friedman wrote and performed a musical piece entitled “The Tide is Rising.”

*“I’m Rabbi Shoshana Mayera Friedman from Temple Sinai Brooklyn Massachusetts. This is my friend the Reverend Fred Small. The tide is rising and so are we. We are rising up with bold political faith based action on climate and we are a singing movement.”*



Rev. Fred Small

## THE TREE OF LIFE

Rev. Fred Small performed “Tree of Life”, written and composed by Guy Carawan and Luci Murphy.

Ain't I got a right to the tree of life. My name is Fred Small. I'm a Unitarian Universalist minister. I'm the founder of the Creation Coalition to mobilize people of faith as an irresistible political force for climate justice. The call to creation care is a call to justice, to inclusion, to securing a place for everybody at the welcome table of God's abundance. This song is by Guy Carawan and Lucy Murphy, and is inspired by the spirituality of the Carolina Sea Islands. Ain't you got a ride to the tree of life.



# SISTER SIMONE CAMPBELL

COMING TOGETHER  
IN FAITH & CELEBRATION  
THURSDAY, 9.24.15



Sister Simone Campbell  
Catholic School Justice Lobby

## THE LEAST OF THESE

*“How long are we going to have toxicity of the earth where we just turned a blind eye to further degradation of the world around us and how long will we have the toxicity of racism. Please let’s work together.”*

I’m Sister Simone Campbell. I’m the Executive Director of Network and National Catholic Social Justice Lobby and got famous for being the leader of Nuns of the Bus. Thank you. We just completed a 2 week bus trip in advance of Pope Francis’ visit. We got back here to DC on the 22nd but I want to tell you a few stories that we found on the road. A few stories of heartbreak, but also of stories of hope. We started in St. Louis in the shadow of the arch which we call the gateway to the west as the gateway to hope, but also in the presence of the courthouse where the Dred Scott decision made all these years ago. We knew then that our anguish at the past can lead to hope for our movement, for this concern for our planet, we have to take the anguish of our planet and know that there is a gateway to hope.

We heard that in St. Louis there is a superfund cleanup site that everybody is arguing over about who should clean it up. And then I found out it’s been there since World War II, which is longer than I’ve been alive and that’s saying something. You would think they would have figured it out, but what it is or tailings from the creature of the atomic bomb and now they just covered it over and now there’s a fire under the earth that’s moving towards the Missouri river. We can weep for the river, we can weep for the earth but quite frankly I wept most for the fact it’s in a low income community where there is toxicity and increased asthma and anguish and children losing their hair because of the contamination.

Our people are weeping. We need to weep. We then saw that in that very same town there’s a toxicity of racism alive and well and tearing that city apart and we knew that the toxic waste site and the toxicity of racism has at its core the same blindness, the same willful desire to turn our eyes from the painful reality of what’s happening and I’ll never forget this mother and this amazing group called Mothers to Mothers. Brave African American moms who’ve taken as their mission to go talk to white moms about what African American moms have to worry about and white moms don’t. And this African American mom told me that she drills her eighth grade and tenth grade sons regularly on what to do when the police stop them...not if.

You keep your hands out of your pockets, you keep your arms away from your body, you say yes sir, no sir and you don’t get any teenage attitude. And her 8th grader said to her recently “Mommy, how long is this going to go on?” She had to say to him, for the rest of your life.



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The world is saying to us, 'how long is this going to go on?' How long are we going to have toxicity of the earth where we just turn a blind eye to further degradation of the world around us and how long will we have the toxicity of racism? Please, let's work together. Let's change the answer so that it will become like what we heard in Little Rock, Arkansas where the low income community decided to plant flowers and vegetables because they knew that when they had flowers blooming and vegetables available, they could invite the mayor down and he'd see it's a place to invest.

And they now have sidewalks and some streetlights and a community gathered together tending beauty because when we plant seeds, when we plant vegetables and flowers, when we open our eyes to the needs of our time, toxicity ends. Community begins. And in the end, we come to know that we invest in each other which is what our earth is crying for. Let us invest, let us open our eyes, let us claim this moment so we can say to Amy's son. It's not the rest of your life. We're on the road together. Thank you.



# AMBASSADOR EBRAHIM RASOOL

COMING TOGETHER  
IN FAITH & CELEBRATION  
THURSDAY, 9.24.15



Ambassador Ebrahim Rasool  
Former Ambassador of South  
Africa to the United States of  
America, Scholar in Residence at  
Georgetown University

## FAITH IN ACTION

*“It is only through fighting the good fight that faith can rehabilitate itself, heal itself, and advance itself.”*

I’m ambassador Ebrahim Rasool, former Ambassador of South Africa to the United States of America, founder of the World For All Foundation and currently scholar in residence at Georgetown University. “I was a hidden treasure and I loved to be known so I created the world.” Thus spoke God through the tongue of the Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him, elevating the world to more than a mere creation of God. The earth in fact is one of the greatest manifestations of God, deserving not only our care but indeed our reverence. As in all beings, harmony, order, and sustainability are maintained through balance and measure. The Quran declares in the chapter named for the first attribute of God, Al-Rahman, the most merciful, the Quran declares that, ‘God has raised the heavens and established the balance to maintain it, so do not transgress the balance, maintain due measure and do not fall short in the balance, for God has created the earth for all creation.’

This evening we gather as a community of believers. Those descendants of Abraham who rally to the visit of a Pope: Francis, named for the patron saint of the natural world, together with those descendants, who only yesterday celebrated Yom Kippur, dramatizing the constant search of humanity for redemption. Today Muslims across the world celebrate Eid al-Adha the festival of sacrifice and through our devotions we join the millions of pilgrims who only yesterday pledged to God their commitment to renewal of themselves and of the world. This moment of convergence cannot be accidental. Our convergence is precisely because today, in a triple crisis besetting the world economic, seen in the poverty and inequality and the greed, humans, in our fear of difference and the plethora of phobias and isms, that we define the other and environment manifested in floods and hurricanes on one side and droughts and fires on the other side.

Our faith is challenged by these triple crises, but for our faith to respond we need to transcend faith’s own crisis. The crisis of relevance in this skeptical world. The crisis of its own fragmentation, wherever we see the opportunity for difference, we seize it. The crisis of the inertia of our orthodoxy. And, the crisis at the hand of each our extremists. However faith does not have the luxury to go into the intensive care unit and heal itself. Faith has to be rehabilitated even as it has to rally the faithful to action. In fact it is only through fighting the good fight that faith can rehabilitate itself, heal itself, and advance itself. Already the Encyclical on climate change of Pope Francis has provided more commitment and



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resolve than a thousand scientific papers. Already the Islamic Declaration on Climate Change has shown more courage in urging Muslims to envision a post-oil world so that carbons don't irrevocably destroy our environment.

Faith is finding its voice and today we must commit that every leader of every country who goes to Paris for COP21 will be aware that they must choose in favor of their finest values and not their pettiest interest. And that they must choose in the decisions they make, the people who sent them and not the lobbyists who pay them. Thank you very much.





# REV. SUZII PAYNTER

COMING TOGETHER  
IN FAITH & CELEBRATION  
THURSDAY, 9.24.15



Reverend Suzii Paynter  
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

## LOVING GOD'S WORLD

*“Reawaken your actual love of God’s world. Take a lesson from Jesus who went outdoors to pray so often...Home begins at love. Use your imagination to experience God as creator. Use your worship place to feature his creation. Use your prayer to touch his creation and let love beget advocacy.”*

My name is Suzii Paynter. I am a Baptist and the Executive Coordinator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a network of churches and global missions. Home begins at love. When you fall in love, you obsess on the details, you remember the moments, you provide gifts, you build memories. You build your life around the beloved and you don’t think a thing of sacrificing for that love. In Ladauto Si, Pope Francis has called us to first love God’s world. He says that both the scripture and the life and words of Saint Francis call for us to be cultivating hearts of “fraternity with the earth and its beauty. Then, sobriety and care will well up spontaneously,” he says, in our businesses, in our daily lives and in our advocacy. Saint Bonaventure fell in love with God’s world. He would call creatures no matter how small a little brother, a little sister... This cannot be written off as naïve romanticism, because if we approach nature with openness and wonder then our choices will determine our behavior to change, to be more intentional and more protective when the poetry is in us.

The visit of Pope Francis calls for a spiritual reawakening, to deepen our actual love for God’s world. In daily practice - visualize God as creator. Read and recite the Psalms of creation. Like Psalm 19: God made a home in the sky for the sun, it comes out like a happy bridegroom or an athlete ready to run. It starts at one end of the sky and it wraps its way to the other.

Or, Psalm 104: You spread the sky out like a tent and build your home here over the mighty ocean. The winds are your messengers. Lions roar as they hunt for the food you provide. But when morning comes they go into their dens and we come out for our work of the day.

Reawaken and deepen our actual love of God’s world. How close is a living plant to your worship service? To love God’s world means going beyond a potted plant or a floral spray in our own houses of worship. How about the offering of living flowers like many of us do with Easter crosses once a year. But how about the intention to replace some of the sterile parts of our worship spaces with living plants and bring God’s creation into worship. To reawaken and deepen our actual love for God’s world, in our spiritual habits and practices, I challenge you. 30 days, 60 days, pray barefoot outdoors with your feet on the ground. Reawaken your actual love of God’s world. Take a lesson from Jesus who went outdoors to pray so often. We are not loving God’s world. If we’re only talking about God’s world or viewing it as a commodity, however beautiful to consume. Home begins at love. Use your imagination to experience God as creator. Use your worship place to feature his creation. Use your prayer to touch his creation and let love beget advocacy.

# BISHOP KATHARINE JEFFERTS SCHORI

## FAITH CHANGES THE ATMOSPHERE

*“Faith can and does move mountains... Working together faith can end mountaintop destruction and develop green jobs in place of squeezing the earth’s limited resources for fuel.”*

Good evening, I’m Katharine Jefferts Schori, presiding bishop of The Episcopal Church, in the US and 16 other nations, all of them connected, as are we all, by this planet we share and the atmosphere that gives us breath. Breathe! Take a deep breath of life and hope, hold it a moment, and feel that creative potential. Now breathe out your willingness to change the world in word and action. We share in God’s creative work by speaking powerful words – “let there be light,” and “let there be life for all creatures!”

We’re here to share that creative work, and breathe more life into a hope-filled future for the world and all its inhabitants. We’ve come together here as people of faith. We believe that faith is both inward and outward, that it shapes how we live in this world day by day, and that it can reshape the world into a holier and more life-giving reality.

Faith can and does move mountains. Jesus challenges his friends to have faith, and tells them that with even so little as a mustard seed, they will move mountains. Working together, faith can end mountaintop destruction, and develop green jobs in place of squeezing the earth’s limited resources for fuel. Challenge the immovable mountains in your neighborhood, or here in the Capitol. Move those mountains toward more abundant life!

The prophet Ezekiel challenged mountains to be fruitful and life-giving. He spoke about a society of justice, and giving a new heart to people who would live in godly, faithful ways. Faith moves mountains and changes hearts – and hearts that know their connections to all humanity and all creation can change the world. You heard Francis yesterday, and again this morning, “we know that faith can change things!” Let your heart of flesh take stock of the treasure you have in the capacity to foment change. Faith teaches us that compassion born of a vulnerable heart builds a road toward wholeness and justice. Vulnerable hearts that can feel the pain of others will invest their treasure in life-giving ways. And the mountains will move!

Faith changes the air, too. The hope that people of faith offer in a crisis brings creative possibility and new life to those in despair. We need that fund of hope in the midst of this climate crisis. The world needs that hope NOW.

Offer your breath of hope in the face of what seems dead or dying. Use your breath constructively – speak truth to your own communities. Bring hope and possibility and new life. Speak truth to leaders and governments – use your breath to motivate changed hearts and behavior. Our creative breath can move this planet’s airshed toward more abundant possibilities. Faith does change the atmosphere, faith does move mountains, faith changes hearts. Keep breathing!

COMING TOGETHER  
IN FAITH & CELEBRATION  
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*Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori  
Former Presiding Bishop of the  
Episcopal Church*

# SENATOR SHELDON WHITEHOUSE

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COMING TOGETHER  
IN FAITH & CELEBRATION  
THURSDAY, 9.24.15



Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator,  
Rhode Island

## FAITH, POLITICS, AND CLIMATE CHANGE

*“Jesus taught us to find truth among things that are humble. So it’s up to us to open our hearts to the cry of the earth as it comes to us from the bumblebee and the pteropod.”*

Good evening everyone. I’m Sheldon Whitehouse, US Senator from Rhode Island, the ocean state. I rise today to call our hearts to hear the cry of the earth as it comes from two of God’s humblest, but most useful creatures. When was the last time any of us thought of the humble bumblebee? We have important things to do, who can be thinking about bumblebees? And the humble pteropod. The bishop, as an oceanographer, knows of the pteropod. Perhaps it is the bumblebee of the ocean. It’s a winged snail. Sometimes called the sea butterfly because over millennia, God’s evolution of these creatures has turned their little snail foot into a beautiful oceanic wing. Here’s what’s happening to them. Here’s the message that they convey.

In a warming climate, bumblebee populations are retreating northward away from the southern hottest part of their ranges. But the northern range for the bumblebees is not expanding. The change in climate is crushing bumblebee populations in a climate vice. Off our west coast, acidified water is hitting the pteropod, especially hard. Researchers found to quote them “severe shell damage.” On more than half of the pteropod they collected from central California to the Canadian border. The pteropod are being eaten away by acidic water from CO2 emissions.

Jesus taught us to find truth among things that are humble. So it behooves us to open our hearts to the cry of the earth as it comes to us from the bumblebee and the pteropod, from the coral polyp and the oyster spat, from the New Hampshire moose and Idaho pine from Utah’s snowfall and California’s drought, from the carbon concentration of our only atmosphere and the pH level of our only oceans; these gifts are all God’s creations. And thus, are their signals not all God’s voice? How could these creatures speak to us more earnestly than with their lives? Of all the voices we listen to, of all the voices we listen to in Congress, why not their voices? Together let us allow their voices. God’s voice, to fill our own hearts and voices. Thank you very much.



## OUR LETTER TO POPE FRANCIS

*“We write to express our profound gratitude for your leadership and pledge our support in fulfilling our moral obligation to our common home. We are all bound together in a fragile ecology of life, human dignity, and grace.”*

Good evening, I’m Amy Butler, I’m the Senior Minister of the Riverside Church in the city of New York. We’ve heard the Pope calling us to action and so tonight, as people of faith and faith leaders, we add our names to this letter to the Pope.

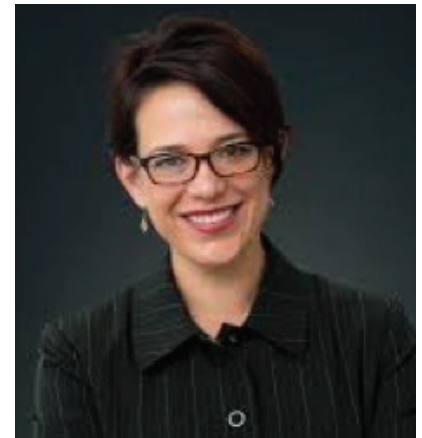
Your Holiness, in your Encyclical, *Laudato Si*, you issued a clarion call to every person on the planet to act urgently on behalf of creation. As clergy and leaders of faith traditions representing millions of Americans, we write to express our profound gratitude for your leadership and pledge our support in fulfilling our moral obligation to our common home. We are all bound together in a fragile ecology of life, human dignity, and grace. As you state in *Laudato Si*, ‘how we care for the earth is inextricably bound with how we care for our neighbors.’ Whether they have food and clean water, safe shelter from storms, or resources to live in peace without worrying over the essentials of life. In recognition of the moral urgency of the time in which we live and the ways that we have failed to protect our common home, we are coming together now in faith to address changing climates.

In response to your leadership, collectively, we are proposing these 5 initiatives to raise the consciousness of the faithful Americans and those of goodwill to urge our leaders to act. First we will engage, we will speak from our hearts. Second we will energize, we will form clean energy groups in our faith communities. Third, we will divest and invest. We will clean up our personal and congregational investments. Forth, we will vote. We will make climate a top issue whenever we vote. And fifth, we will educate. We will stay informed and we will educate others.

Using your global platform you have demonstrated how voices of faith can inspire millions to act for the common good. As religious leaders of one of the world’s most influential nations, we pledge now to join our voices with yours in calling on individuals to take personal action on behalf of creation and using our influence to demand action from our public officials. We send this letter in solidarity and peace. Perhaps you have felt with me these days, a sudden shaking of realization as our country has reacted in awe and gratitude for the example that Pope Francis is showing us.

For us, leaders of faith and representatives of faith institutions, we must ask why our country is so surprised. We have a lot to do and so we pledge ourselves to this commitment, through this letter, and through our actions.

COMING TOGETHER  
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Amy Butler  
Riverside Church, New York

# REV. DR. OTIS MOSS III

COMING TOGETHER  
IN FAITH & CELEBRATION  
FRIDAY, 9.24.15



Reverend Dr. Otis Moss III  
Trinity United Church of Christ,  
Chicago, IL

## REV. DR. OTIS MOSS III

*"I need you to turn to your neighbor, look at your neighbor... and you need to thank the person next to you. We are thankful that you are attending here tonight."*

This congregation here at the Washington National Cathedral sets an example for all congregations. An effort to be effective stewards of God's creation. The Cathedral has committed to explore various sustainability initiatives for its historic site and buildings under its stewardship to reduce its carbon footprint. The Cathedral has already installed LED lights within this beautiful facility that we're in. Not only does it speak in terms of its architecture but also its commitment. They've already installed geothermal heating and cooling system in the Dean's residence and changed some 1500 light bulbs to energy efficient LED to cut an annual CO2 output by a 145 tons every year.

As a next step the Cathedral commits to examining and exploring the following. This is a wonderful initiative. A comprehensive energy audit of its 12 buildings, improving energy efficiency in the existing lighting fixtures. Explore alternative energy sources such as geothermal and solar. And improve the site's water management and reduce domestic water consumption. If you would like to help them, if you would like to be part of this great challenge you can sponsor an energy efficient LED light bulb. You can do that, you can go on the back, there is a table. They'll accept your cash or your credit cards and you can go back to our own congregation and use the Cathedral as a model of what can happen locally. And before you leave here we have these commitment cards that we want to make sure that you fill out so that we can continue to stay in contact with you. This is not just a moment but we are part of a movement.

And finally we want to thank several other very special people. I need you to turn to your neighbor, look at your neighbor, don't look at me we're in a different neighborhood up here. Look at your neighbor and you need to thank the person next to you. We are thankful that you are attending here tonight. Now give yourselves a hand for being here tonight. At this moment if we would stand for our closing prayer and benediction which will be lead by Reverend Mariann Edgar Budde, the Episcopal Bishop of Washington.

# REV. MARIANN BUDDÉ & REV. DR. JOEL HUNTER

## REV. MARIANN EDGAR BUDDÉ

*“Bring healing to our lives that we may protect the earth and not prey on it. That we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.”*

Good evening. These are the words of Pope Francis, found at the end of Laudato Si. A prayer for our earth. “All powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us, the power of your love that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace that we may live as brothers and sisters harming no-one. O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and the forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to our lives that we may protect the earth and not prey on it. That we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light. We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us we pray, in our struggle for justice, love, and peace. And may we all say together. Amen. God bless you all.”

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*Reverend Mariann Edgar Budde  
Episcopal Bishop of Washington*

## CLOSING REMARKS: REV. BRIAN MCLAREN

It's wonderful that planet earth has one Pope Francis but it's also wonderful that there are leaders like the people you've just heard from and many in this room whose voices are adding to this. I also want to thank the wonderful team that has come together to make this night possible but also to carry on, to start something that we believe will carry on after tonight. I want to thank Blessed Tomorrow and ecoAmerica. I want to thank Auburn Seminary, I want to thank Convergence, Interfaith Power and Light, and Faith in Public Life, and of course our host here at the National Cathedral.



*Reverend Brian McLaren  
Author, blogger, speaker, and  
activist in the faith and climate  
movement.*



# KARA BALL

COMING TOGETHER  
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*Kara Ball  
Sector Director of Blessed  
Tomorrow, ecoAmerica*

## COMING TOGETHER IN FAITH AND CELEBRATION

This has been a wonderful week for us in DC and really for all of us. It's been a wonderful time for me savoring Pope Francis' visit and his messages on caring for creation and justice, and loving and encouraging each other along the way has just been real sustenance for my journey and I'm sure yours. I have been grateful for Pope Francis' leadership.

At my faith tradition, there is a beautiful hymn called All Creatures of our God and King, the words of this were actually written by Saint Francis, the namesake of Pope Francis. It reminded me of some words that I read in Pope Francis' Encyclical, his prayer. These words are "God of love, show us our place in this world as channels of your love. For all the creatures of this earth, for not one of them is forgotten in your sight." These words for me had special meaning because I first came to my client through the lens of conservation and my desire to protect all of God's creatures and God's earth which sustains us all.

As I've continued on my journey, I've also been inspired by meeting people who've already starting to experience the impacts of climate change and by meeting people whose families are thriving because they've had the opportunity to benefit from clean energy solutions. Each of you in this room and online have come to your work and to our meeting today with something that has driven your own passion and love. Maybe it's someone you know who's been impacted, maybe it's a special place that you know and love that you can already see is starting to change. Whatever that is, I encourage you to take a moment and remember who or what that is that brought you here and to keep that in your heart.

There's a saying that work is love made visible and we've all done so much work this week to celebrate Pope Francis' visit. There have been fasting and prayer vigils and marching. Many of you have greeted Pope Francis at the White House or cheered him on as he spoke to congress and a number of you are now heading up to New York and Philadelphia to continue your work and support. Your faithful witness in your work is adding a loud amen to Pope Francis' call for a just and a sustainable world.

We have the opportunity now to carry a momentum forward in the coming months as we continue our work. Today's meeting is about how we can accelerate the momentum that we're generating to forward climate solution with faith leaders in among our faith communities. We also want to raise awareness of the great work that you already are doing and increase involvement in that work so that together we can make climate and even broader moral and social issue.

## REV. GARY HALL

*“When the faith community comes together and can collaborate and bring all of its resources and all of these various points of view together, it seems to me that the entire public common good advances remarkably.”*

Hi, I’m Gary Hall. I’m the dean of Washington National Cathedral and it is my great privilege and pleasure to welcome you all, especially those agencies and NGOs that have been partnering with us to bring this event off in the light of the Pope’s visit.

Our ability to work together collaboratively as a non-profit, not only of the faith community, but as non-profit agencies is really an important moment. It seems to me it is moving the issue of climate change more firmly into our national agenda. When the faith community comes together and can collaborate and bring all of its resources and all of these various points of view together, it seems to me that the entire public common good advances remarkably. I’m extremely grateful for the spirit of collaboration that has brought this and I really look forward to that collaborative spirit moving us forward and shared action together.

Yesterday, at Congress, Pope Francis said this. He said, “Now is the time for courageous actions and strategies aimed at implementing a culture of care and an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded and at the same time protecting nature. We have the freedom needed to limit and direct technology to devise intelligent ways of developing and limiting our power and to put technology at the service of another type of progress, one which is healthier, more human, more social, more integral.

It seems to me that in addressing this issue of climate change in the framework with which he’s done it, Pope Francis has called all of us back to the core affirmations of our various traditions. In that spirit, I welcome you to this cathedral which opens its arms and its doors to all faith traditions across the spectrum. I invite you into this shared work we’re doing of going back to our core values so that we may address this crisis and also at the same time make life more abundant and fruitful for all of God’s beloved creatures. Thank you for being here and thank you for committing to work together.

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Reverend Gary Hall  
Washington National Cathedral

# REV. DR. JOEL HUNTER

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COMING TOGETHER  
IN FAITH & CELEBRATION  
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Reverend Dr. Joel Hunter  
Senior Pastor, Northland CA,  
A Church Distributed

## REV. DR. JOEL HUNTER

*“This is a watershed time when not only awareness be raised but action be taken to do what is good and loving.”*

Let us pray. Lord, we gather here together from all places on the spectrum of faith, from all depths of appreciation for your great gift in creation. We have a sense of reverence about how precious and how delicate and how important that gift is for all nature, for all creatures, for all plants, for all people. We are mindful that you are redeeming God, renewing God. We ask you to call us in this effort together. We thank you for the sense of love that we feel as we work together to do what’s right, to do what’s important for health. We understand that this is a *kairos* moment in history.

This is a watershed time when not only awareness be raised but action be taken to do what is good and loving. We ask for your guidance and we ask for the increasing connectedness that you will give us in this collaboration and beyond for the sake of your planet, for the health of the most vulnerable and for the appreciation of a great gift of nature. We pray in your name, Amen.



## RABBI JONAH PESNER

*Zeh Hayom Asah Adonai – Nagila Venismicha Bo!  
This is day God has given us; let us rejoice and be glad in it!*

Many of us went to sleep last night, still stirred by the words of Pope Francis, reinforced by the additional teachings of faith leaders from across the spiritual spectrum that filled this cathedral with passion, commitment and hope, amplified by live streaming, Facebook and Twitter. Now who would have imagined we would wake to news that China has finally committed to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions through an ambitious cap and trade program?

Every day that God gives us is a gift, but thank you God, for giving us some news we can celebrate! In his address to Congress and in the words of Laudato Si, the pope has not only challenged all of us to confront the catastrophic climate crisis, he has also modeled for us the critical role the faith community must play to avert ecological and social disaster. Our role is threefold: We must make the spiritual argument, we must do the political work and we must inspire our people to act.

Let us begin with the spiritual argument. As faith leaders, we are uniquely positioned to call our society and our nation to task, to live up to our own ancient and enduring cherished values. As a Jew, the spiritual argument to confront the crisis of our climate couldn't have been clearer as I sat in services the day before yesterday. As the world witnessed the pope being welcomed to our country by the President and thousands of people of faith, the Jewish people were gathered in synagogues across the world to conclude the High Holy Days – the 10 days of repentance from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur. For thousands of years, the Jewish people have celebrated the New Year on Rosh Hashanah by rejoicing in God's creation and then spending days reflecting on our transgressions, seeking atonement on Yom Kippur. What a metaphor for the crisis humanity faces at this fragile moment.

If we really truly rejoice in the splendor of God's creation; if we mean it when we say The Earth is God's and fullness thereof; if we truly believe we have been enjoined to be stewards of the earth – then atone we must. For human activity has led to a warming of our planet, a rising of the seas, a poisoning of our soil, seas and air.

Human greed has depleted our resources, led us to catastrophic consumption, and threatens to displace scores of humanity in the face of violent storms, and barren fields. So yes, if we wish to celebrate the gift God gave us – the gift of existence, of living, and breathing, of seeing and tasting – then we must acknowledge the responsibility that human existence carries in the face of the climate crisis of our age. Atone we must for the sin of HASH-CHATA – laying waste to earth's abundance.

Indeed, the liturgy of Yom Kippur is all plural. We repeat over and over "Al Cheit Shechatanu Lifanecha." For the sin we have committed against you... Our transgression against creation; our sin against the most vulnerable who will suffer the most can only be atoned when in an

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Rabbi Jonah Pesner  
Executive Director, The Religious  
Action Center of Reform Judaism

## RABBI JONAH PESNER

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expression of achdut – oneness – we collectively say Al Chet Shechatanu Lifanecha. We have sinned before you God and we will atone. We will repair and we will heal the world which we have laid waste. As faith leaders we know that redemption is possible. Our job is to echo the voices of the ancient prophets in making the spiritual argument, in calling out the moral imperative. But sounding the moral alarm is not enough. We have work to do. And we have politics to do. For as Pope Francis reminded Congress yesterday: “You are called to defend and preserve the dignity of your fellow citizens in the tireless and demanding pursuit of the common good, for this is the chief aim of all politics.” Let us hear the pope’s charge, and do some politics. Let us think globally and act locally, but let us also think locally and act globally.

On a local level, we know our institutions can be a beacon of sustainability. There are so many examples. Temple Emanuel of Kensington, with a leading edge renovation, models energy efficiency and conservation in its design, and is working to become carbon neutral. Congregations across the United States work with their members to reduce the carbon foot print of the their homes, in addition to a range of congregational projects like community gardens, composting, solar energy and many more strategies to act locally. It must become a norm of religious life in the United States and across the world to model environmental sustainability in our own homes and institutions; to live out God’s call to till and to tend, to steward Creation.

But in our local communities and congregations, we also have enormous (if untapped) political power. Millions of people of faith in our congregations and institutions have the power to challenge local governments and municipalities to become sustainable communities. We also have the capacity to become a political force that might transform our nation, and the globe. The president has placed an enormous stake in the ground with the rules limiting carbon emissions. These rules are being challenged in court and they are being implemented in 50 states. Imagine the pressure we could put on 50 state governments if millions of our members, state by state, demanded that the rules be fully implemented?

We can also leverage our political power to act globally. The Green Climate Fund was established in 2010, within the framework of the United Nations Convention on Climate Change, in order to aid developing nations and mitigate the impact of climate change. The goal is to raise \$100 billion by 2020, with \$10.5 billion pledged so far. President Obama has pledged \$3 billion to the Fund, but we must pressure Congress to heed the pope’s call and make good on that pledge. Imagine scores of representatives and senators hearing from our millions and millions of members on the moral imperative to support the Fund. In fact, given the news of this very day – that China has committed to a program of cap and trade – imagine if our congregants, parishioners and people of all faiths joined in pressuring Congress to finally pass real legislation to meaningfully reduce our nation’s emission of greenhouse gasses. China’s commitment removes the core argument against passing such limits – as well as cap and trade – the notion that we wouldn’t be able to compete economically. Indeed, on the eve of the pope’s visit, members of the

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United States Senate introduced a bill to reduce our emissions even beyond the targets set by the Obama administration. Theirs is an audacious goal, and it is upon us – people of faith – to build the political will and the spiritual conviction so that such a vision can be realized!

As Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel taught: “The hour calls for Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity.” And so, our final task is to inspire. For our spiritual argument will be ignored and we our political work will fail if we don’t act boldly to energize our followers to act with courage. Pope Francis has given us an exemplary model of religious leadership – and we must follow him. In our preaching and in our teaching, hundreds of thousands of clergy and lay leaders must raise up the call to action to challenge minds and stir hearts. As I sat in synagogue on Yom Kippur, I was inspired to action by the liturgical words I encountered of Rabbi Harold Schulweiss, informed by John Donne, and inspired by the Shema prayer – that central Jewish doctrine that says Adonai Echad, the God is One.

*I close by sharing it with you.*

*You are the One who unites all things,  
Who links life to life in a sacred chain.*

*The forests anchored in the soil  
Breathe air into our lungs.*

*Our faces are reflected in the creatures of earth;  
We carry the sea within us.*

*Our fate is connected to rivers and deserts,  
Our family a many-branched Tree of Life.*

*All beings intertwine in You;  
All are encompassed in “Adonai Echad.”*

*Thus no man is an island;  
No soul exists apart.*

*To say echad is to know this truth:  
To see the world whole, humankind undivided.*

*Precious and holy are these words we speak;  
Adonai Echad – We proclaim You One.*

*So let us close by joining hands and saying these words together,  
let’s repeat them three times:*

*Adonai Echad  
Adonai Echad  
Adonai Echad*



# REV. DR. KATHARINE RHODES HENDERSON

COMING TOGETHER  
IN FAITH & CELEBRATION  
FRIDAY, 9.25.15



Reverend Dr. Katharine Rhodes  
Henderson, President, Auburn  
Theological Seminary

*“How do we renew and reboot our leadership for this moment to express in words and deeds the passion that we feel about care for creation? About climate change, about this issue that brings us together today? How do we use our intelligence, imagination, love and energy for this work?”*

Welcome, all of you here, fellows, travelers, this has been an amazing week for all of us and I think looking at the Pope’s face today I think maybe he feels a little bit of the weariness, the excitement, but also little bit of the weariness that some of us feel. We have been on a long journey and we have experienced the Francis effect. We have feasted on words and sites and sounds and pageantry and experienced delight and maybe some tears along the way.

I think a lot of us in this room are leaders, faith leaders and we have seen a masterful leader at work this week. Who has been pitch perfect, who does not have a stump speech, he has beloved themes but not a stump speech. He has been able to nuance depending on his audience most deftly. For those of us who try to handle political issues, as faith leaders, he has been able to thread the needle so carefully that we all need to go back and study his speeches to figure out exactly how he was able to that and then go and do likewise.

I was also struck by the way he is able to revere and look into the face of children, not just speak to adults and people in power, but to look at the face of children and the phrase from the Bible, “For me, to see your face is like seeing the face of God.” Took on a whole new meaning seeing him look into the faces of children as he passed through lines.

He clearly knows how to use his power. He knows how to inhabit his leadership and he knows how to project faith in public life. He’s winsome and invitational but he exhibits love that doesn’t insist on it’s own way. Which I think is also something that we have to think about too. Many of us in this room are leaders and today, we have to figure out our leadership. How do we renew and reboot our leadership for this moment to express in words and deeds the passion that we feel about care for creation. About climate change, about this issue that brings us together today.

How do we use our intelligence, imagination, love and energy for this work. We have to see if the Francis effect will take effect within us and among us.

I am thrilled to have this panel here, this is an esteemed panel and I’m going to introduce them briefly. Right here to my right is Jim Wallace, who is the President and Founder of Sojourners. Jim, welcome this morning. We have Susan Henry Crowe, the General Secretary of the General Board of Church and Society of the Methodist Church. Rachael Lamb, to her right, the National Organizer and Spokesperson for Young Evangelicals for Climate Action, and to her right, Rachael’s right,

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we have Ebrahim Rasool who was Ambassador of the Republic of South Africa to the U.S. and is now a distinguished scholar in residence at the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University.

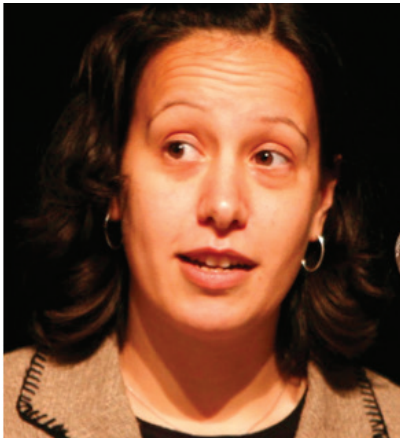
Joelle, we're happy you're here, that's great. We have Joelle Novey here who is the Director of Interfaith Power & Light here in Washington D.C., so welcome esteemed panelist. I'm going to jump in, we're going to allow our panelists here to make some introductory remarks. I actually watched on my phone this morning what 3 minutes actually feels like. I want you all to keep your opening remarks brief and I want to pick up in a first question here something from the encyclical, it says that, "Although the post industrial period may be remembered as one of the most irresponsible in history, none-the-less there's reason to hope that humanity at the dawn of the 21st century will be remembered for having generously shouldered its grave responsibilities.

Panelists, let's begin. Tell me a little bit about, from your perspective, how we will generously shoulder our grave responsibilities relative to climate change? At this moment in time, in light of this week, what we've experienced this week. Joelle, since you slipped in here, let's have you start.



## JOELLE NOVEY

COMING TOGETHER  
IN FAITH & CELEBRATION  
FRIDAY, 9.25.15



Joelle Novoy  
Interfaith Power & Light  
Washington D.C.

*“In our experience, there’s no shortcut... [the best way] has been to mobilize congregations the way building relationships in person, face-to-face with people in their congregations has worked for us.”*

Thank you. I’m Joelle Novoy, I direct the Interfaith Power & Light that serves the D.C. metro area and the state of Maryland. We’re 1 of 40 state affiliates of Interfaith Power & Light that are working around the country to engage people of faith in responding to climate change. Listening this morning to the charge that we heard from our speakers, I was thinking about our experience doing this work, recruiting and engaging congregations to speak out on climate issues throughout the region.

What I’ve learned is that we can do it. In Maryland, we have Senator Mikulski who is the Vice Chair Woman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, a critical voice in making sure that the Green Climate Fund is appropriated. She has 5 district offices, we have faith leaders arrange meetings with her in 4 of them over the summer. Talking to her about why they, as Maryland faith leaders, care about the climate impacts around the world. It very much got her attention and made an impression. Likewise, with the Clean Power Plan, we had faith voices testifying at every hearing, collecting postcards, commenting on the Clean Power Plan and their congregations after services. How did we get there? This is the hard news. The only way we’ve been able to engage congregations in doing this kind of work in this concrete way is by grassroots organizing with them in person in their congregations. Day in, day out, meeting with them, sitting with them, in folding chairs in the church basement and talking about where our energy comes from and what impact that’s having on the world and what they want to do about that.

In our experience, there’s no shortcut. We wish there were. There’s been no shortcut that I have found, no email campaign, no fantastic online resources and unfortunately not even sending their clergy to a really inspiring day like this has been able to mobilize congregations the way building relationships in person, face-to-face with people in their congregations has worked for us. The person we find in those congregations is not usually the clergy person, it’s what we call the ‘green sheep’ in the community. Somebody who feels in their heart that they want their faith community to respond to climate change, but may not have support. It’s wonderful if they have support clergy, they don’t always and they sometimes feel a little bit lonely and we, by providing resources and personal support to help the green sheep, flock together, we have been able to build that. I was thinking about last night’s service and I would guess between a third and half of those who attended were people Interfaith Power & Light knows personally from our work in their communities. I think they came for the amazing lineup and speakers to be inspired, but they also came because they know us and they work with us over the long haul, not on one green campaign, but on being in community together in responding to these issues.



## AMBASSADOR EBRAHIM RASOOL

*“The most important step we can take as people of faith [is] to reclaim [our] power... and say to everyone that this is who we are as a community that when it mattered to the earth, we were there.”*

Thank you very much and good morning to everyone. Maybe not as immediately practical as Joelle was just now, I lived with the acclamation that someone like Nelson Mandela had experienced through his life. I look at the phenomenon of Pope Francis and I see the enthusiasm that we’re sitting in a protestant institution, that I’ve heard the enthusiasm of a Jewish rabbi, I’ve seen the Imam last night and so forth and I wonder, “What is this phenomenon?”

It struck me when I remembered a quote that Plato put into the mouth of his character Galileo. When Galileo was proclaimed a hero, Galileo’s response was, “Unhappy is the land that needs a hero.” The acclamation of Pope Francis is not so much about Pope Francis, it is about our state of unhappiness, it’s about our state of dis-empowerment, it is about our state of helplessness, it is about our disenchantment with the leaders that we have, it is about our state of empowerment for the brokenness of our faith institutions.

Therefore the acclamation of Pope Francis in the first instance has to be not the external adulation, but the internal reclaiming of our power. If anything, that is the starting point of all the action, otherwise we will all chip away at this campaign, and that project, and this better greening, all of which are terribly important and must continue. What we are yearning is the cry from the heart for leadership and for faith to fan its voice and to overcome its brokenness. I think what Pope Francis does for all believers, for all people of faith and for all people of humanity is that he gives us the confidence that faith does not just have a voice, that faith does not have just morality, but morality is often the weakest point of power.

We may not be powerful but we are right. We don’t know what to do with being right. Therefore, I think that we have enjoyed Pope Francis speaking at the White House, in Congress, now at the United Nations, now to the powerful and unless we pick up that call, Pope Francis may be like Nelson Mandela described himself, “A floating meteor coming and going.” We will still be without our power. I think that that’s the most important step we can take as people of faith is to reclaim this power and to turn it into projects that are now coherent, and not dislocated from each other.

A surge from the faithful that is no longer fragmented and competitive but now cooperative and collaborative. To overcome the competitive instincts of our faith, to run after the few fish who still believe and put our labels on them, but to say to everyone that this is who we are as a community that when it mattered to the earth, we were there.

COMING TOGETHER  
IN FAITH & CELEBRATION  
FRIDAY, 9.25.15



Ambassador Ebrahim Rasool  
Center for Muslim-Christian  
Understanding, Georgetown  
University

# REV. DR. SUSAN HENRY-CROWE

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COMING TOGETHER  
IN FAITH & CELEBRATION  
FRIDAY, 9.25.15



Reverend Dr. Susan Henry-Crowe  
General Board of Church  
& Society

*“...The challenge of climate change is a call for us to seek personal, social and civic righteousness”*

I would remind us of these words, Shalom, Salaam Alaikum, peace be upon you. As we have begun to realize that, while we are quick to speak of communities and peoples, as vulnerable and disproportionately impacted, both which are often very true, we too rarely make space for those same communities to offer leadership and direction in creating climate solutions. It is here that I believe the church, and I hope the United Methodist church, can be a model in the global community in living and leading into a future of community led and locally rooted climate leadership.

I am probably not the one that should be here today but there are people that live this reality every single day that should be sitting here speaking on their own behalf. The past summer, the Board of Church and Society convened a solidarity visit in Mindanao in the southern part of the Philippines. It's a nation among the highest on the climate vulnerability index, but which contributes only 0.3% of global emissions.

Youth and women and men from across the Philippines developed a program to explore the intersectionality of climate justice and violence, providing participants the chance to witness firsthand the ways that natural disasters such as typhoons whose frequency and intensity are likely to arise and warming waters.

I am blessed to serve an agency, the United Methodist Church, whose connections stretch across the United States and around the world and it's through these relationships, in the Philippines, in the D.R.C. and the coal mines of West Virginia that we're deeply understanding of our call to creation, our journey in faith, giving room for all to speak on their own behalf and how the challenge of climate change is a call for us to seek personal, social and civic righteousness.

## RACHEL LAMB

*“...There’s a group of people that say my faith explicitly calls me to loving, faithful hope-filled actions explicitly on climate.”*

Thank you. I often share that my generation has only known a warming world because there’s not been a single month in my entire life where the average surface temperature of the earth has been below average. That means, for the past 30 years, the entire world is creating a new normal. A new pattern of, I would say, unhealthy choices that are leading us continually down a path what we’re doing presently and in the future with the climate challenge and the climate crisis.

I think simultaneously, at least especially in the United States, we often see this. Often it gets called as the rise of the religious nones. What are young people doing, do they continually see the church relevant to addressing social challenges, environmental challenges that they’re experiencing today? What’s been such a privilege for me, working with Young Evangelicals, is that there’s a group of people that say my faith explicitly calls me to loving, faithful hope-filled actions explicitly on climate. That there isn’t a discontinuity between the fundamentals of my faith which means asking, what does it mean to love God, what does it mean to actually love my neighbor, and what does it mean to take care of creation?

Arguably, not really arguably, you can’t do those things well if you’re not engaging on climate. Both personally asking how I’m contributing to the problem and what can I do to address it, but also corporately, and especially within the context of the church. Knowing that the church is supposed to bear witness to what God’s mission is for the world. God’s mission is all about reconciliation and restoration of all things.

When I’m thinking about hope, one of the first vivid images that comes to my mind, is Christian Bilingual University in Eastern Congo where YCA has a partnership. We have a couple climate fellows there and they embody hope to me. In a context where there is extreme corruption, political corruption, where there’s violence that happens around them all the time, where there’s a lot of threats both domestically and foreign to one of the second largest rain forests in the world and a lot of the people struggling to figure out what it means to move out of this condition of poverty and move forward in the world.

They’re asking all these questions and they’re looking to this university because they’re seeing a different message. They’re seeing groups of people who say, even in this context, we are engaging in the work of joining Christ and reconciling relationships. Broken relationships were between people and also with the land. Just last week, they installed solar panels on their university in which they are providing 100%, meeting 100% of their own energy needs as well as providing solar energy to the community around them at rates cheaper than petrol.

COMING TOGETHER  
IN FAITH & CELEBRATION  
FRIDAY, 9.25.15



Rachel Lamb  
Young Evangelicals of America,  
National Organizer



# REV. JIM WALLIS

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COMING TOGETHER  
IN FAITH & CELEBRATION  
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Reverend Jim Wallis

They're actively living it out and they're being able to share that story with young people in the United States. There's a sense in which, here we're embolden to address our own context, work with our own faith leaders here and political leaders, but recognize that we are a part of a larger community, a larger church which is also working in their own context. That's exciting to me, gives me a lot of hope to continue with that work on the ground. Actively living out reconciled and restored relationships.

## SOJOURNERS

*"...The faith community have to help the environmental movement make a fundamental paradigm shift."*

First it's such a blessing to be with all of you this morning. I see a lot of old friends, I always know they're old friends when they say, "Remember when we got arrested together?" Also to see a new generation coming up. To see that the successor to my old dear friend David Saperstein is also a revival preacher. Thank you Jonah. To hear Rachel talk about what young evangelicals believe now. I can't tell you what that makes me feel. I'm feeling quite stunned. That's the word that's come to mind after the last couple of days, to hear the things some of us have been saying and trying to do and working for so many decades lifted up at a White House ceremony, the template of which was completely traditional, but the presence of Pope Francis and the impact he had on everybody including the President. I've never seen the least of these talked about so much at the White House. Ever.

In the Congress yesterday, I still can't believe, not just what I heard but where I heard it. We've been saying these things and doing these things for years. I've been able to speak to some of them before and after, and how deeply moved some of the lawmakers in Congress were. The parable of these words falling on fertile soil or rocky ground I think is really important for us to stand together.

I would say two things, just two things. One: I'm deeply moved by what I just saw again, he's talking to staff at the UN and he began at the Congress by talking to them about their vocation. Not issues, their vocation. Remember your vocation. I know some of them are really deeply struggling with that right now. Maybe I'll say a word about our vocation in regard to these questions. I want to suggest that we in the faith community have to help the environmental movement make a fundamental paradigm shift.

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As long as they and we keep thinking about this issue as an issue that we have to move up the ladder of our concerns. An issue we have to lobby around and become more powerful with, to make the issue resonate more. In the polls, we're on our voting list of priorities, we'll continue to fall short of what needs to happen. Climate is not an issue, it's something that impacts every other issue that we care about, and more deeply impacts all of the people that we most care about.

For me, I'll just conclude by saying, I spoke to all of our interns, which I love to do every year at our open chapel. My job is to welcome them and remind us all of our vocations, so I talked about the vocation of Sojourners. The vocation of Sojourners is really the 25th chapter of Matthew. That text brought me as a student radical to my faith. "I was hungry, and you weren't there for me. When do we see you hungry, as you've done to the least of these, you've done to me." One day I was wrestling with this text that converts me over and over again. Just in a very simple way I asked myself, "What is climate change doing to all of those particular people that Jesus called the least of these?" "I was hungry" and so, with massive food shortages and starvation, the hungry get hungrier. "I was thirsty," with more terrible droughts, the thirsty get thirstier. "I was naked," stripping millions of all the resources, "I was a stranger," dislocating millions more as immigrants, more strangers. "I was sick," spreading more disease. "I was a prisoner," more destabilization, more chaos, more desperation, more violence and more crime. If Matthew 25 is my conversion text, how can this not be central to everything that I do? The Pope said this to us. Listen carefully, he's talking about what he calls "integral ecology." The Dean read that quote, integral ecology.

We have to move vocationally to an integral understanding of the relationship to the poor and to nature, and if we listen to how he took his name, the man of the poor, the planet and the man of peace. That's why he took Francis name. I believe we need to do all the other things that we heard. The 4, 5 things Brian, make total sense to me. We have to help the faith community and the country make the integral shift away from climate as an issue, something that is central to our vocation as people of faith and what this nation must do to find itself again. I think that's perhaps our vocation to change the whole conversation on climate.

# MELISSA ROGERS

COMING TOGETHER  
IN FAITH & CELEBRATION  
FRIDAY, 9.25.15



Melissa Rogers  
White House Office of Faith-  
Based and Neighborhood  
Partnerships

## MELISSA ROGERS

*“We will work with leaders throughout the world to achieve a durable ambitious agreement at this year’s conference in Paris and I know your voices will be essential on whether that is achieved”*

Good morning. It’s great to be with you all. It’s great to see so many friends. Thank you, Bryan for that very kind introduction. I just have to say a word about Brian. Brian is brilliant. He’s also so kind. There had been a number of times where he’s just sent me an encouraging note or said something encouraging on the phone when I really needed that word of encouragement, and I just want to thank him. That means a lot. He has that pastoral spirit. He may not be serving officially as a pastor of church anymore, but that predated his service as a pastor and continues, and I want to thank you, Brian for that.

Great to see so many friends. Thank you to all the sponsoring organizations for this terrific conference. It’s been quite a week, hasn’t it? For so many reasons. As you know, we were thrilled to host Pope Francis at the White House this week. From the moment the visit was scheduled, the President called us down and said, “I have a charge for you for this visit and that is that I want this visit to have lasting value.”

What we did was put together some teams from the National Security Council and the Domestic Policy Council, which normally don’t play in the same sandbox, and look at issues of climate change, poverty, marginalization of people in various ways, refugee issues, issues related to the sustainable development goals and eradicating extreme poverty around the world, promoting religious freedom around the world, and other issues like that where the President and Pope Francis share values and commitments.

We worked together for months to develop ideas to broaden the agency and fill up the agenda for the visit that the President and Pope Francis had. We got to go over to the Vatican in the summer and began some conversations with people at the Vatican, which was a real joy and pleasure, and then continue those conversations. In fact, those conversations have continued after that visit, and go on.

On Wednesday, we released a fact sheet that I’ll make sure all of you have, if you don’t already, that outlines some of the initiatives that our administration is taking that flow from the values that the President and Pope Francis share. Some of those initiatives include some new partnerships aimed at addressing climate change and we hope that some of those partnerships will be things that you all will want to join in. We’re just getting them started and we welcome you all to take a look and tell us what we should do next. We hope that will lead to lasting change in the kind of charge the President gave us to be fulfilled.



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I say that to you mostly just to say that I see this gathering as a parallel to our efforts. It is aimed at creating lasting change. It is saying this visit of Pope Francis that will hopefully lift up some of the issues that we care about, it should be more than a visit. It should be something that galvanizes us to go across our communities and across the world and to create lasting change on behalf of the people we care so much about.

Thank you. Thank you for treating the visit in that fashion. Thank you for organizing this strategic discussion today. Thank you for the opportunity that we will have to work with you to continue to make lasting change. That's very important to the President and I know it's important to you.

As you all in this room have made so clear, I feel like I'm definitely preaching to the choir here, you've made this a moral issue. I was just standing in the back and came in and heard you all speaking from the heart about how this affects people and why this matters.

It's been your voice that has really pierced the noise in our culture. It's been your voice that has led to more and more people everyday coming to the view that this issue must be dealt with now if we take seriously our moral obligation to our children and grandchildren. Thank you for that as well. I know the President shares your view.

The President has said that there's no challenge that poses a greater threat to future generations than climate change. You know better than anybody the impacts of climate change - rising sea levels, intense droughts, catastrophic storms - but also the profound effects that we're seeing the climate change has on health of our children.

In the past three decades the percentage of Americans with asthma has more than doubled and climate change is putting these individuals and many other vulnerable populations in greater risk of landing in a hospital. We're talking about children, the elderly, the sick, the poor, some communities of color. Rising temperatures can lead to smog, longer allergy seasons and increased incidence of extreme weather-related disasters and injuries.

We know that this is intolerable. It cannot continue. It cannot be ignored. It must be addressed. That's one of the reason why Pope Francis, as you know, wrote so eloquently about this in his encyclical. He calls for all of us to care for our common home.

I quote him saying: "The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change. I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of the planet." I think you all were able to watch his very eloquent remarks this morning at the UN General Assembly and we were all pleased and moved to see that.

## MELISSA ROGERS

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President Obama, as you know, is committed to meeting this challenge as well and he's doing so in a lot of different ways, especially looking at how this impacts our poor and vulnerable populations. The President believes we have a moral obligation to leave future generations a planet that's not polluted or damaged.

The President recently said, "On this issue, of all issues, there is such a thing as being too late." That's the hard reality that we face and that has to motivate us to move. The President continued, "This moment is upon us of being too late." That's why we have to convey to our people tomorrow, and the next day, and the day after that. The President is deeply committed to this issue, as I'm sure all of you can tell.

During his first year in office, he made a pledge that by 2020, America would reduce its greenhouse gas emission if all other major economies agree to limit their emissions as well. To reinforce this commitment, the President launched a climate action plan in June 2013, which as you know, consists of three pillars: cutting carbon pollution in America, preparing the United States for the impacts of climate change; and leading international efforts to combat climate change and its mitigated effects.

We're putting those agendas into effect in lots of ways by implementing America's clean power plan, which established the first ever national standards to limit carbon pollution for power plants, which as you know, is the single biggest source of carbon emissions in the United States and to increase access to clean energy for all Americans.

As you know, however, we can't meet these challenges alone. That's why your movement is not just based in the United States but is global in nature. It's a global problem and it will take all of us working together across the world to solve it. That's why we're working with other nations to advance cleaner energy technologies enhance energy efficiency and promote best practices to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions as aid to developing countries to increase their own resilience to climate change.

We've been working side by side with other nations to design important new institutions to combat climate change globally such as the Green Climate Fund to which the US has pledged three billion dollars. When I was leaving the White House, we were concluding two arrival ceremonies in one week, that will make a White House staff pretty tired by the way, on the occasion of the President Xi's state visit to Washington. As you know, US and China are marking new milestones in the fight against climate change and building global momentum in advance of the very important Paris climate talks that will happen later this year.

We will work with leaders throughout the world to achieve a durable ambitious agreement at this year's conference in Paris and I know your voices will be essential on whether that is achieved or not achieved. We are grateful for your work on that as well.

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Let me just close by talking about a story that the President told that you may be familiar with as well. He was telling a story, on Christmas eve in 1968, the astronauts on Apollo 8 did a live broadcast from the Lunar orbit. You had Frank Borman, Jim Lovell, William Anders, the first humans to orbit the moon describing what they saw and simultaneously reading from the Book of Genesis. Later that night they took that photo that we all know. The image of the earth, beautiful, breathtaking, this marble of blue oceans and green forests and brown mountains, brushed with white clouds and rising of the surface of the moon. While the side of the planet might seemed routine today, imagine what it was like, and some of you remember what it was like, to see that from our home for the first time.

Even the astronauts said, the President recalled, were amazed and he quoted Lovell as saying, "It makes you realize just what we have back here on earth." "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good."

Thank you for your commitment to ensuring that the goodness of the earth is safeguarded for the next generation. Thank you.





# BOB PERKOWITZ

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COMING TOGETHER  
IN FAITH & CELEBRATION  
FRIDAY, 9.25.15



Bob Perkowski  
ecoAmerica

Greetings! We are here about Coming Together in Faith on Climate to support and extend the Pope's message. I think he's doing quite well by himself, but he's asked us to pray for him and he's asked us to wish him well. I think we should all do that.

We had a great discussion and celebration last night and I want to thank all of the organizations who put that together. While we were doing that, Pope Francis was at St. Mark's Church here in Washington, DC serving food to the homeless, that's where he had dinner last night while we were in church. This is a man who lives his values.

Let's start with the question that I asked yesterday – *What is the greatest gift that God has given you?* Just pause for a moment and think about that. I would say the greatest challenge that Christ has given us is climate change. I believe that if we can solve climate change, we will solve a lot of the other inequities that the Pope talks about. Pope Francis is showing us the way. He is speaking out on climate and asking us all to lead whether you're clergy, or whether you're just you.

I work with ecoAmerica and our faith program is called Blessed Tomorrow. We think that there are four things that you have to be able to do. The first thing is you have to become climate literate. The program offers talking points, sermons, and a strong rationale for leadership. The second thing is to care for creation - to reduce your footprint. Then we all have to be climate missionaries. Spread the word and the work to others. Then, we have to connect and share and work together.

We would love to work with you on this mission, and it starts now. *What are your best ideas about how we can lead and how we can work together to address climate change?*

## REV. STEPHANIE JOHNSON

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*“Our world is changing, people are sad. We have a pastoral responsibility to take care of those people and invite them into conversation.”*

I’m Stephanie Johnson, a Priest in Diocese of Connecticut. One of the things that I’ve found and realized that we’ve been doing throughout this, and an important issue that people of faith don’t know, is realize their link to climate change. There is a lot of grief. There is a lot of sadness. We heard it today. Our world is changing, people are sad. We have a pastoral responsibility to take care of those people and invite them into conversation about how sad they feel and how afraid they are.

These workshops that we offer open up the space for real action on climate change once people get beyond the world denial, denial of the climate, denial of how things are so different and how in Boston they had incredible winters and how fires are raging and people losing their homes and superstorm Sandy destroyed many of our congregations homes.

Particularly people of faith, it’s our calling. It’s our vocation to step up and say we walk alongside you, we pray for your grief, and we hope that that grief moves into action. I encourage you to think about that as a way of invitation. It’s not political, but it’s pastoral and we’re called to be.

COMING TOGETHER  
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Reverend Stephanie Johnson  
Episcopal Church

# REV. DR. JIM ANTAL

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COMING TOGETHER  
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Reverend Dr. Jim Antal  
MACUCC

*“We need to move the Golden Rule 2.0 so that our ethical foundation is as connected to the unborn as it is connected to the neighbor in the pew next to us.”*

Two theological suggestions. I really think we have an opportunity to expand the conversation from what we’ve done. Convening, listening, opportunities for congregations, absolutely essential, but let’s go to the next step. Convene truth and reconciliation conversations and invite the people who can’t divest individually to have open conversation with those who have. That’s the way America is going to begin to engage the level at the depth it needs to and people of faith can convene those conversations.

The other thing is that the Pope hinged all of these comments to Congress on the golden rule and he did it because it is the most universal religious peace comment to all religions. We need to move the Golden Rule 2.0 so that our ethical foundation is as connected to the unborn as it is connected to the neighbor in the pew next to us. That is theological work that we need to be about.



## CLOSING PRAYER

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### CLOSING PRAYER: JIM ANTAL AND STEPHANIE JOHNSON

- REV. JOHNSON** Everybody stand, if you're able. Right now we're all anxious to leave. We have Pastor Jim and I in front, so we ask the you take a second to just join together so you're close, you're not separate, shoulder-to-shoulder. Holy One, your love extends through all time and space, to all parts of your creation, which you created and called good.
- REV. ANTAL** You made a covenant with Noah and his family, putting a rainbow in the sky to symbolize your promise of love and blessing to every living creature.
- REV. JOHNSON** As people of faith, we are called to covenant with you and our neighbors and the world around us.
- REV. ANTAL** We pray for wisdom to hear your invitation to us and our congregations and responding to the environmental crisis we face.
- REV. JOHNSON** We pray for the healing of the earth in present and future generations may always enjoy all the fruits of the earth.
- REV. ANTAL** We celebrate the presence of so many faithful witnesses who care for your good creation.
- REV. JOHNSON** Bless us and our ministries as you work to heal your beloved world.
- REV. ANTAL** Keep us energized as we advocate clearly, passionately and faithfully for a just and fair climate treatment.
- REV. JOHNSON** Give us courage and strength to follow the good news of Pope Francis and to continue forward hopeful and joyous in the works you have given us to do.
- REV. ANTAL** May we rejoice always in hope and in the knowledge that you send your Spirit so that your face of the earth may be renewed. Let the people say Amen...
- PARTICIPANT** Amen.
- REV. JOHNSON** Go in peace.

## SPEAKER LIST 9.24.15

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### REV. OTIS MOSS III

Senior Pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, IL.

### RABBI STEVE GUTOW

President of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs.

### REV. SHARON WATKINS

General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada.

### REV. BRIAN MCLAREN

Author, blogger, speaker, and activist in the faith and climate movement.

### RABBI SHOSHANA FRIEDMAN

Assistant Rabbi, Temple Sinai Brookline, MA

### REV. FRED SMALL

Minister, First Parish, Cambridge, MA and Co-Chair, Religious Witness for the Earth

### REV. GARY HALL

Dean, Washington National Cathedral

### IMAM MOHAMED MAGID

Former President, Islamic Society of North America

### REV. JOHN DORHAUER

Ninth General Minister and President, United Church of Christ

### REV. DR. GEOFF TUNNICLIFFE

Former Secretary General, World Evangelical Alliance

### SISTER SIMONE CAMPBELL

Executive Director, NETWORK and Member, Sisters of Social Service

### AMBASSADOR EBRAHIM RASOOL

Distinguished Scholar-in-Residence, Al Waleed bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University and Former Ambassador of South Africa to the United States

### SUZII PAYNTER

Executive Coordinator, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

### BISHOP KATHARINE JEFFERTS-SCHORI

Former Presiding Bishop, Episcopal Church of the United States

### SENATOR SHELDON WHITEHOUSE

United States Senator for Rhode Island

### REV. DR. AMY K. BUTLER

Senior Minister, Riverside Church New York

### REV. DR. MARIANN EDGAR BUDDE

Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Washington D.C.

## SPEAKER LIST 9.25.15

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### **KARA BALL**

Blessed Tomorrow Program Director,  
ecoAmerica

### **REV. BRIAN MCLAREN**

Author, blogger, speaker, and activist  
in the faith and climate movement

### **REV. GARY HALL**

Dean, Washington National Cathedral

### **REV. DR. JOEL HUNTER**

Senior Pastor, Northland,  
A Church Distributed

### **RABBI JONAH PESNER**

Executive Director, The Religious  
Action Center of Reform Judaism

### **REV. DR. KATHARINE RHODES HENDERSON**

President, Auburn Theological Seminary

### **REV. DR. SUSAN HENRY-CROWE**

General Secretary, General Board of Church  
and Society of the United Methodist Church

### **JOELLE NOVEY**

Director, Greater Washington Interfaith  
Power and Light

### **RACHEL LAMB**

National Organizer and Spokesperson,  
Young Evangelicals for Climate Action

### **REV. JIM WALLIS**

President and Founder, Sojourners

### **AMBASSADOR EBRAHIM RASOOL**

Distinguished Scholar-in-Residence,  
Al Waleed bin Talal Center for Muslim-  
Christian Understanding,  
Georgetown University

### **BOB PERKOWITZ**

ecoAmerica Founder and CEO

### **MELISSA ROGERS**

Executive Director,  
White House Office of Faith-based and  
Neighborhood Partnerships

### **REV. DR. JIM ANTAL**

Conference Minister and President, MA  
Conference, United Church of Christ

### **REV. STEPHANIE M. JOHNSON**

Convener, New England Regional  
Environmental Ministries Network



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*ecoAmerica grows the base of popular support for climate solutions in America with research-driven marketing, partnerships, and national programs that connect with Americans' core values to bring about and support change in personal and civic choices and behaviors.*

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