

# EarthCare Connections

Fostering awareness of our spiritual oneness with the earth and promoting active care of creation.

<https://www.unityuwm.org/earthcare>  
[earthcare@unity.org](mailto:earthcare@unity.org)

*The earth does not belong to us; we belong to the earth. This we know.  
All things are connected like the blood that unites one family.  
Chief Seattle*



Applications for this year's Green Star Award are being accepted until May 13, 2024. The award recognizes spiritual centers that completed at least three significant environmental activities in calendar year 2023. To download a copy of the application, go to <https://www.unityuwm.org/earthcare>, under Green Star Award.

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## 12 Powers for our Planet – Faith

<https://www.unityuwm.org/ec-curriculum-faith>

Faith is the first in EarthCare's unique and powerful year-long initiative regarding Unity's 12 Spiritual Powers. Each unit provides Unity leaders with hands-on education materials and concrete actions that can be taken to become better stewards of creation. Faith empowers us to stand firm in our spiritual conviction and maintain belief in the possibility of good to come through all circumstances. Spiritual Faith is not blind, but rather is informed by our direct experiences of spiritual truth.

This module focuses on how the spiritual Power of Faith relates to and is enhanced by nature and EarthCare. In addition to an affirmation and prayer, you will find:

- An article entitled, "Faith Can Change the World-View," by Rev. Cylvia Hayes.
- A Sunday talk by Rev. Kathy Harwood Long
- A four-part self-directed micro-learning curriculum at the end of which participants will be able to:
  - Demonstrate understanding of the spiritual power of faith.
  - Identify evidence of the activity of faith in the human interaction with nature and the whole of creation.

- Integrate the spiritual principle of faith as related to Earth/Creation care into
- Original youth and teen lessons created by Rev. Eliasa Sabogal.
- An Eco-celebration of Blue Whales.
- Resources in the areas of books, podcasts, videos and quotes.

**Please take advantage of this wealth of information from your EarthCare Team!**

## LET'S TALK TREES!



As this is Earth Month, and your editor being a lifelong tree hugger, what better time to talk about trees.

Many of their benefits are obvious: their beauty that is unique for each and every one, the gentle sound of their leaves rustling in the wind both in summer and fall, the shelter and food they provide for birds and animals, and the cooling shade they provide on a hot summer day. But trees do so much more!

Did you know that one grown tree eliminates 1,600 pounds of Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) annually?<sup>1</sup> Along with this, they create cleaner air by releasing oxygen for us to breathe. Their leaves and bark also help capture harmful particulate matter in the air.

They also play an important role in urban settings. These include reducing surface temperature during heat waves, cleansing the air and helping prevent flooding during storms. And their presence alone improves resident's physical and mental health. Numerous studies have indicated that greater tree density in an urban area leads to a wide variety of health benefits for local residents, such as decreased stress, lower respiratory and heart disease rates, and greater overall life expectancy.

More trees in an area are also linked to lower rates of childhood obesity and respiratory disease. There's even a correlation with public safety as neighborhoods with more trees have lower crime rates. So trees are even an environmental justice issue.<sup>2</sup> With all these contributions, incorporating trees into the urban landscape is a win-win that benefits whole communities and the environment.

The Inflation Reduction Act allocated \$1.5 billion to pay for new trees in 350 cities and tribal communities. Up to \$250 million of this is allocated to the "Justice 40" Initiative, which requires 40% of the benefits to reach communities that are disadvantaged or nature deprived.<sup>3</sup> In order to ensuring that the voices of people and communities are heard, an Environmental

Justice Advisory Committee was created. To receive regular updates on environmental justice news and engagements, sign up for the CEQ EJ Connector newsletter at <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/Vm8pCFj/spring>.

Many communities have organizations committed to planting trees. Google it to find what is available in your area and how you can get involved. But aside from that, just plant trees whenever and wherever you can, knowing that they will provide untold benefits both for you and for future generations. We all know in our hearts and souls that we have a deep connection with trees--and it is good.

## EarthCare Website

<https://www.unityuwm.org/earthcare>

As part of UWM's new platform, the EarthCare website has been updated, reformatted and expanded to provide you more information and resources. Included is **12 Powers for our Planet**, which contains the content of every one of Unity's Spiritual Powers. In addition, the **EarthCare Program** section has been reorganized in accordance with EarthCare's bedrock **Path to EarthCare**, and includes 49 files categorized according to various steps and actions.

Other sections have also been updated, including **Ministry Resources** and **Contact** information for every member of the EarthCare Team.

The website addresses every aspect of your environmental program, whether new or well-established. Please take advantage of this tremendous resource!

## Mentoring/Collaborative Calls



Mary Gerken hosts these calls monthly. A different topic is highlighted each time. One of the benefits of participating in these calls is that they provide a way for you to connect with other churches in your respective region and open new avenues to collaborate. For the date and time, please email Mary, at [agreatpickle@gmail.com](mailto:agreatpickle@gmail.com).

## Facebook

Beth Remmes administers EarthCare’s Facebook Page. Over 1500 followers have discovered the timely resources and interchange of ideas that it contains. To join them, please go to:

[www.facebook.com/UnityEarthCare](http://www.facebook.com/UnityEarthCare)



## YouTube Channel

Hosted by Mary Gerken, numerous videos are available on [EarthCare’s YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4iYARFqsqLhuodoDC52R5Q/playlists):

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4iYARFqsqLhuodoDC52R5Q/playlists>

There is a wealth of information in the areas of Social Justice, Educational, Spiritual, Poems and Inspiration, and Music.

## Questions? Here’s Where to Go.

For general questions, please email [earthcare@unity.org](mailto:earthcare@unity.org) or call Mike McCord at 913.907.4061  
For all others, contact the representative in your region:

<u>Region</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Email Address</u>
Canada	Mike McCord	michael_mccord@sbcglobal.net
Eastern	Martha Powers	mpowers7@gmail.com
Eastern	Mary Gerken	agreatpickle@gmail.com
Great Lakes	Kathy Harwood Long	kathyharwoodlong@gmail.com
Northwest	Cylvia Hayes	cylvia@3estrategies.org
West Central	Mary Gerken	agreatpickle@gmail.com
Pacific Rim	Cylvia Hayes	cylvia@3estrategies.org
South Central	Mike McCord	michael_mccord@sbcglobal.net
South East	Beth Remmes	bremmes@hotmail.com
South West	Helen Wright	wrighthf@gmail.com

## Closing Poem



I think that I shall never see  
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest  
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,  
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear  
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;  
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,  
But only God can make a tree.

Joyce Kilmer  
1886 -1918