

air

Life-giving Breath of God: Protecting the Sacred Gift of Air

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, an energy efficiency upgrade of the country's 269,000 houses of worship would prevent 6 million tons of CO₂ from being released into the atmosphere and saving congregations more than \$500 million.

Ideas for Action

- Use compact fluorescent lights (CFLs): they last up to 10 times as long as incandescent bulbs and will keep half a ton of CO₂ out of the air.
- Drive smart and drive less: use a fuel efficient car or an alternative method of transportation such as public transit, walking, or biking.
- Conserve energy: turn off the lights, adjust your thermostat, and investigate using "green" energy options such as solar or wind power.
- Encourage your local, state, and federal public officials to support and use renewable sources of energy and provide attractive public transportation options.

Additional Festival of God's Creation materials, including action opportunities and resources, are available by visiting:
www.umc-gbcs.org.

Join the Interfaith Climate Change Network, a network of individuals of faith and religious organizations who are helping to protect God's precious gift of air. To sign up for the network, visit www.protectingcreation.org or contact info@protectingcreation.org.

This Earth Day resource is developed each year by the Eco-Justice Working Group of the National Council of Churches of Christ. Liturgical materials adapted from God's Earth Our Home, produced by the Eco-Justice Working Group. For additional information and resource links including previous Earth Day materials, visit www.webofcreation.org/Incc.

O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures . . . When you send forth your breath, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground. – Psalm 104:24,30

Clean air is essential for human life. An average person breathes in over 3,000 gallons of air each day. At the same time we are inhaling life-sustaining oxygen, we are breathing in the byproducts of our lifestyle choices—the fumes of cars, the fine particulate waste of industrial production, the chemicals and off-gases from synthetic products in our homes.

Our air—the atmosphere of God's world—is a global commons, which nurtures and protects all life. As a community of faith we understand our moral obligation to protect the air around us—as stewards of creation and as instruments of justice and reconciliation for our neighbors, nature, and generations yet to come. Working together, with God as our guide, we can clean our air so that future generations will inherit a world as pure and clean as the one first touched by the life-giving breath of God.

Call to Worship

O God, Holy Spirit, whose breath gives life to the world and whose voice is heard in the soft breeze, we need your strength and wisdom. Come to us and among us; come as the wind and cleanse us. We join with your Creation and with each other to sing the song of the stars; to rejoice in the sunlight; and to refresh the air.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Leader: We thank you Creator God, ruler of the sky. At your Word the sky was formed and by Your Word it is sustained.

People: Praise God, O my soul!

Leader: We thank you, Gracious God, for the vastness of the universe, for the wind, and the immeasurable heights of blue above.

People: Praise God, O my soul!

Leader: We thank you, ruler of all the universe, you for the stars, for the energy from the sun, and that which is seen and unseen.

People: Praise God, O my soul!

Leader: You have created the universe as a garment without seams and given us our atmosphere and set it over us to protect us.

People: Praise God, O my soul!

Leader: From the sky you send rain on the hills, and the earth is filled with your blessings.

People: Praise God, O my soul!

Prayer of Confession

Leader: Giver of Life, in the midst of polluted air we groan with Creation.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: For the times we have failed to think of the harm done to air.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: For our reckless plundering and waste.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Assurance of God's Love

Leader: We are children of God. We carry with us the promise that we are loved. Each day is new. The future is open. Let us act in love and with justice.

Sending Forth: Acts of Commitment

Leader: God our Creator, you have made us one with this earth, to tend it and to bring forth fruit. May we bring purpose and hope, O God, in joy and in faith, in truth and in freedom.

People: Lead us forth, Spirit of God.

Leader: We trust God who calls us to be the church, to love and save the whole creation; to serve justice and resist evil; to proclaim Christ our judge and our hope.

People: Lead us forth, Spirit of God.

Take Action

Take action now to protect our precious air resource and to give glory to God's creation. Reduce your energy use both at home and in the office, use energy efficient transportation such as fuel efficient cars, and use less toxic substances when purchasing items such as carpeting and paint for home and office use. Since our energy use is a major contributor to both local air pollution and global warming, reducing our energy consumption and choosing cleaner, greener alternatives will help protect God's precious air resources.