



 **greenfaith**
international
network

The Time to Act is Now

Grassroots Multi-Faith Action for the Earth

Introduction

Religious communities are at a crossroads with our response to climate change and other imminent threats to the environment.

For much of the past 15 years, religious communities' primary focus has been education and awareness raising on climate change, teaching that our faiths and their central teachings apply not only between people and to the Sacred, but person to planet.

That education, while still vital, is not enough. We must take bold public action.

We've seen the magnitude of the crisis. We know that public action at scale is absolutely essential.

On 11 March, 2021, diverse religious and spiritual communities in 49 countries carried out 420 actions to draw attention to the climate crisis. The Sacred People, Sacred Earth day of action was organized by a grassroots, global, multi-faith alliance called the GreenFaith International Network. You can experience the energy and passion of these actions by watching this short video on [Sacred People, Sacred Earth](#).

Around Earth Day in April and World Environment Day in June, religious and spiritual leaders around the world often offer a sermon, khutbah, dharma teaching, dvar torah, or other spoken message on the climate crisis. The religious or spiritual gatherings around these days, and every gathering of its kind, offers an opportunity to convey how our different faiths compel us to take bold action on climate change. The actions organized by grassroots people of diverse faiths worldwide, a few of which are featured in this document, offer powerful instructional examples of religious belief in action, examples which can help pastors, imams, gurus, priests, rabbis, and other spiritual leaders bring to life the importance of public, morally-rooted action on climate change.

The GreenFaith International Network (GFI) organized Sacred People, Sacred Earth around a series of 10 Demands which represent a moral and spiritual compact between people and planet. These demands prioritize the urgency of the climate crisis and the steps which must be taken to solve it. In the following pages we share these demands, each accompanied by a brief story of a grassroots action on 11 March and more information about why action is necessary in the struggle for global climate and environmental justice.

GFI is planning its next day of action in late 2021, before the November United Nations climate negotiations. We hope you'll get involved! Watch www.sacredpeoplesacredearth.org for more information.

May this resource be a blessing.

GreenFaith International Network Founding Partners

Australian Religious Response to Climate Change

Instituto de Estudos da Religião (Brasil)

Faith & the Common Good (Canada)

Alianza Interreligiosa y Espiritual por el Clima (Chile)

GreenFaith India

GreenFaith Indonesia

GreenFaith Kenya

GreenFaith Nigeria

Southern African Faith Communities Environment Institute

Inter-Religious Council of Uganda

Faith for the Climate Network (United Kingdom)

GreenFaith (USA and global coordinator)

GreenFaith Zambia

GreenFaith Zimbabwe

Demand 1: ENERGY

100% renewable, clean energy for all

Sustainable, affordable power for everyone - especially the 800 million people without access to electricity

Religious Communities in Action:

Ensuring affordable and renewable energy access to the 800 million people globally still without reliable, safe, and clean power is the closest thing we have to a Global Goals universal accelerator. Small scale renewable energy aids in public health, education, women's empowerment, livelihoods, regional/geographic equity, and reduces demand for fossil fuels that heat the climate. That's why GreenFaith co-founded the Shine campaign, which on 11 March called for access to clean energy both as a climate justice issue and a fundamental human right. Shine brings together religious and philanthropic donors and investors with energy access and climate justice activists committed to making sure that absolutely everyone has access to clean, safe, affordable energy.

Also on the Sacred People, Sacred Earth Day of Action, a team of nine senior religious leaders in Nairobi, Kenya, presented a petition to the Ministry for Energy, demanding 100% renewable and affordable energy for all. This action represented the first time that Kenya's religious leaders had issued such a call to their government, and it was followed with a press statement and TV interview highlighting Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Christian, and tribal leaders.

Related News Story:

"Despite significant progress in recent years, the world is falling short of meeting the global energy targets set in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) for 2030. Ensuring affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all by 2030 remains possible but will require more sustained efforts, particularly to reach some of the world's poorest populations and to improve energy sustainability."

World Health Organization,
May 21, 2019.

[VIEW STORY](#)

Demand 2: FINANCE

Global finance aligned with compassionate values

Increased financing - in COVID recovery and beyond - for sustainable industry, infrastructure, and agriculture

Religious Communities in Action:

Charlotte, NC, USA is the home of some of the world's biggest banks; the East Coast headquarters of Wells Fargo and Bank of America are located there. These two banks have consistently supported pipeline development including Enbridge's Line 3, Dakota Access Pipeline, and others. Major energy companies and utilities, such as Duke Energy, plan to promote natural gas, reliant on these pipelines, as a leading source of energy for the region.

On 11 March, as part of the Sacred People, Sacred Earth Day of Action, GreenFaith organized religious activists to gather at Colonial Pipeline headquarters, in West Charlotte (also known as "tank town") to read out the 10 Demands, to call for Wells Fargo and Bank of America to end their financing for fossil fuel infrastructure, and to call for immediate increases in financing for renewable energy. They chose this location because Colonial's 100 million gallon/day pipeline, which runs from Texas to New York, had recently spilled more than 1.2 million gallons of gasoline into a nearby nature preserve. As is often the case, the company had for weeks dramatically underrepresented the size of the spill and the danger it posed to nearby residents and the area's water supplies.

News Stories:

From Switzerland:

"What began as a health crisis has quickly become an economic and social crisis. COVID-19 has exposed the interconnected nature of our natural, economic, and social systems – and above all—highlighted our vulnerability to systemic risk and the inequities of our economies...The pandemic has given us a stark warning of what is at stake if we, collectively, cannot reset our systems for a carbon neutral, nature positive world. Returning to business-as-usual is not an option if we want an economy that protects our planet and people."

World Business Council for Sustainable Development, September 20, 2020.

[VIEW STORY](#)

From Australia:

There's still time for you to move your money to more sustainable and just investments, as part of a global movement.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Demand 3: EMPLOYMENT

Jobs and healthcare for all

A just transition for workers impacted by climate change through job training, living wages, and universal healthcare and insurance



Sydney: photo by ARRC. People of faith demand action in Sydney, Australia, on the steps of Pitts Street Uniting Church.

Religious Communities in Action:

Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC), a GFI Founding Partner, is known for its creative public actions. Its 11 March interfaith action with Buddhists, Anglicans, Catholic, and Uniting Church members and others outside the Prime Minister Scott Morrison’s office in Australia called on the Minister to “Stop Adani” (a large proposed coal mine) and to create millions of green jobs to accelerate renewable energy development in Australia, while also funding a just transition for affected workers and communities. The eye- and ear-catching protest involved ringing bells to ‘sound the alarm’ for the climate emergency. The group also sang and meditated with banners and signs, appealing to Mr. Morrison, who is Christian, to respond to climate change with compassion and fairness.

Related News Story:

“Just Transition strategies were first forged by labor unions and environmental justice groups, rooted in low-income communities of color, who saw the need to phase out the industries that were harming workers, community health and the planet; and at the same time provide just pathways for workers to transition to other jobs. It was rooted in workers defining a transition away from polluting industries in alliance with fenceline and frontline communities”.

Climate Justice Alliance:
Communities United For A Just Transition

[VIEW STORY](#)

Demand 4: SELF-DETERMINATION

Respect Indigenous Rights

A strong defense for the legal rights of indigenous communities and environmental defenders

Religious Communities in Action:

During the Sacred People, Sacred Earth Day of Action in Windhoek, Namibia, people of faith staged a silent protest on the steps of St. George's Cathedral to protest the drilling by Canadian Oil Company ReConAfrica in Northern Namibia, and released a letter signed by 34 Anglican Bishops protesting the drilling. The drilling infringes on the rights of the indigenous San people and affects the Okavango Delta, which is a World Heritage Site and a biodiversity hotspot. Namibia is the driest sub-Saharan country and one of the most vulnerable to climate change. The action was organized by Green Anglicans with support from **Southern Africa Faith Communities Environment Institute** - a GFI Founding Partner.

On the other side of the globe, **Alianza Interreligiosa y Espiritual por el Clima**, GFI's Chilean Founding Partner, organized religious institutions in Santiago and across Chile rang their bells at 11am to sound the alarm for climate justice and to call for the protection of Indigenous Environmental defenders. That same day in Minnesota, USA, multi-faith partners organized a mobilization at the Mississippi River, with several religious leaders arrested for peacefully blocking the bridge. The protestors called on President Biden to reject the Line 3 oil pipeline which runs through Minnesota and violates Indigenous treaty rights. Following the demonstration, volunteers made phone calls, sent emails and signed petitions calling on the government to respect Indigenous rights.

Relevant Resource:

"A continuous struggle for the Mapuche peoples (in Chile) is their rights to the lands and territories, which legally and/or ancestrally belong to them. In the Region of the Araucanía and Los Ríos, the rights of the Mapuche people have been gravely threatened by the expansion of extractive, production, and infrastructure projects. The great majority of these initiatives belong to private corporations".

International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs

[VIEW RESOURCE](#)

Demand 5: HOSPITALITY

Welcome for migrants

Generous opportunities for climate refugees to migrate and establish new homes

Religious Communities in Action:

In Sudan, an 11 March student teach-in at the University of Bahri taught people about the ties between climate chaos and the refugee crisis in Darfur, a region of the western Sudan that has faced significant violence. In Uganda, residents of the Bidibidi refugee camp, the world's second largest refugee settlement, organized an event to highlight the need for greater opportunities for climate refugees to migrate. These events serve as reminders that refugees have a powerful voice to be heard by world leaders and policy makers.

Mawa: Photo by Mawa Zacharia. The Christian faith community in the Bibidi Refugee Camp was organized by people who were forced to leave their homes in Sudan because of climate fueled conflict and demanded welcome for climate refugees around the world.

Relevant Resource:

“Of course we can say that climate change was among the forces that made them move. But the phrase “climate refugee” suggests something very absolute. Either some are a “climate refugee” or they are not. But the reality is that a variety of forces – including climate change – will cause people to move. So absolute definitions are difficult to apply.”

Climate and Migration Coalition.

[VIEW RESOURCE](#)



Demand 6: RESTORATION

No more climate pollution

Net-zero greenhouse gas emissions in wealthy countries by 2030;
accelerated finance/technology transfers for global transfers for global
net zero before 2050



Chile: Photo by Arianne van Andel. Description: GreenFaith International Founding partners Alianza Interreligiosa y Espiritual por el Clima (AIEC) leads an action on the square at Central Iglesia Franciscana in Santiago, Chile.

Religious Communities in Action:

In Perth, Australia, and across the whole continent of Australia, local communities are pressuring their Prime Minister to address climate change by committing to 100 % renewable energy and net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. Australian Religious Response to Climate Change, a multi-faith, member-based organisation of people from around Australia, organized over 100 churches, mosques, synagogues, and sanghas to participate in the Sacred People, Sacred Earth global day of action, and will continue to work together toward the common goal of 100% renewables and no fossil fuels.

News Stories:

“So far, there is little evidence that political leaders are willing or able to meet their collective Paris targets. Even so, some veteran climate experts see hope in the strikes, marches and other protests that are taking place around the world. “Civil disobedience erupts when injustice has been collectively determined to be unbearable,” says Christiana Figueres, who helped to usher in the Paris agreement as head of the UN climate convention in 2015. “And that is where we are today.”
Nature: The Hard Truths of Climate Change

[VIEW STORY](#)

Demand 7: BIO-DIVERSITY

End the planet's desecration

No new fossil fuel exploration or infrastructure, no more deforestation; no more habitat or biodiversity loss



Yogyakarta: Photo by Kader Hijau Muhammadiyah. These Muslim organizers in Indonesia were part of the demand for compensation from developed (ex-colonial) countries to developing (former colonized) countries. They also fasted during their action.

Religious Communities in Action:

Indonesia is one of the world's mega-biodiverse countries. But its natural diversity and tropical forests, which absorb and sequester massive amounts of carbon dioxide, face grave threats from expanding palm oil plantations and related forest clear-cutting. On 11 March in Yogyakarta, an eco-literacy youth movement organized by Kader Hijau Muhammadiyah (KHM) and Rumah Baca Komunitas (RBK), two Muslim youth groups, stood in solidarity for "justice for the earth" and called for their government to protect Indonesia's forests. They held a moment of silence for the earth at a major intersection and then held a religious-cultural event, without use of electricity, that included prayers, poetry reading, and music. During the action, they also distributed seeds and encouraged participants to plant them as a sign of their commitment to a sustainable future.

Related News Story:

"When governments act to protect and restore nature, the authors found, it works. But despite commitments made 10 years ago, nations have not come close to meeting the scale of the crisis, which continues to worsen because of unsustainable farming, overfishing, burning of fossil fuels and other activities. 'Humanity stands at a crossroads.'"

The New York Times.

Sept. 15, 2020.

[VIEW STORY](#)

From Peru:

Learn more about the intersections of biodiversity and food systems through this [video on Slow Food](#) (in Spanish)

[VIEW STORY](#)

Demand 8: DIVESTMENT

Eliminate immoral investment

No further financing or COVID bailouts for fossil fuels and exploitative agriculture

Religious Communities in Action:

Since the COVID pandemic began, the G20 nations, with the world's largest economies, have provided over \$260 billion in recovery funds for the fossil fuel sector - a staggering mis-use of precious resources for an industry whose disdain for people and planet alike is well-documented. In Nigeria, for example, oil companies have exploited communities and violated the human rights of activists for decades. Courageous civil society and religious organizers in Nigeria have fought against this exploitation; they need support from around the globe. One way that religious communities can stand in solidarity with communities victimized by oil and gas projects is to divest their investments from fossil fuels - joining over 400 religious institutions which have already done so. Religious communities can also become involved in increasing levels of climate finance campaigning to pressure asset managers, banks and insurance companies to end their support for the oil and gas.

News Story:

"To be in line with 1.5C and avoid the worst of the climate crisis, G20 governments should rule out any continued fossil fuel support, in recovery spending or otherwise."
G20 countries still backing fossil fuels through COVID-19 response, Reuters, Nov. 9, 2020

[VIEW STORY](#)

Demand 9: REPARATION

Climate reparations from wealthy countries

Initiatives by wealthy countries in climate financing and technology transfer, in recognition of these countries. Colonialist and environmental debt

Religious Communities in Action:

Because of their historical share of greenhouse gas emissions, wealthy countries bear most of the responsibility for the climate crisis. Residents of small island states, while they bear next to no fault, are already suffering some of the most severe climate impacts due to rising sea levels and increasingly intense storms.

The Sacred People, Sacred Earth Day of Action began on a beach in the Pacific island nation of Vanuatu, one of the most climate-vulnerable places on the planet. Islanders of diverse religious and spiritual backgrounds prayed for those on Vanuatu already affected by rising sea levels and called for the world's wealthy countries to pay their fair share to help protect small island states from the impacts of the climate crisis which is, for the islanders, existential.

News Stories:

Since at least 2015, "Poorer nations suffering from extreme weather disasters, so much so that their citizens are seeking refuge in safer terrains outside their borders, want rich nations like the United States to pay for reparations and to relocate populations."

USA Today,
September 12, 2015.

[VIEW STORY](#)

The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists is a nonprofit organization concerning science and global security issues resulting from accelerating technological advances that have negative consequences for humanity. In late 2020, the Bulletin published this case for climate reparations.

[VIEW STORY](#)



Nairobi: Photo by GreenFaith Kenya. Children in Nairobi, Kenya, demand a just transition and climate reparations.

Demand 10: COMMUNITY

Bold faith community leadership

Sustained, united action guided by the teachings of our diverse religions, ushering in an equitable, peaceful life for all

Religious Communities in Action:

Secaucus, New Jersey - right across the Hudson River from New York City - is an increasingly diverse community with a growing Hindu population in the largely Christian town. On 11 March, Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, and Humanist partners held the town's first multi-faith climate march, calling on New Jersey's governor to end the raids on the state's clean energy fund. After ringing a 250 year-old church bell to sound the climate alarm, the group committed to form a GreenFaith Circle as a platform for their ongoing climate activism.

Secaucus: photo by Fletcher Harper. Children and other people of faith call for funding for renewable energy in Secaucus, NJ.



GreenFaith International Network Values

The GreenFaith International Network seeks to do our work guided by these values, which were developed in collaboration with multi-faith partners around the globe.

ROOTED IN SPIRITUALITY

We are centered and inspired by our faiths and revere the sacredness of Earth and all people.

MOVED BY COMPASSION

We act out of love and a deep will to end the suffering of people and the planet.

PASSIONATE FOR JUSTICE

We strive to end all forms of oppression and bring forth an equitable and healed world.

INCLUSIVE BY NATURE

We collaborate with persons richly diverse in culture and backgrounds.

RESPONSIBLE IN PRACTICE

We lead by example and seek to embody integrity, transparency, and accountability.

BOLD FOR GOOD

We show courage in taking risks and creativity in our actions.