

“On the Urgency and Need for Action on Climate Change”

April 2018 was the 400th consecutive month of global temperatures above the 20th-century average, the NOAA, 5/17/18.

<https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/news/global-climate-201804>

From our Unitarian Universalist list of Principles, number 7: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are apart.

From the list of responsibilities of the Green Sanctuary Ministry, number 1 and 2:
Raise member awareness of environmental issues that impact our congregants, our community, our country, and our planet.
And encourage action to rectify environmental injustices.

In an effort to fulfill our responsibility to uphold the principles of respect for the web of life and the responsibility of the Green Sanctuary Team, this letter is presented to our congregation.

This is the first in a series of letters to ourselves about the need for action to fight climate change. It is an effort to bring Climate Change back to the conversation at the level of immediate concern. During the last presidential election, it was not even part of the debate.

There are of course very many human rights and environmental concerns. And Climate Change seems like just one more. One so large and far away that maybe it's solution is also very large and far away. “Maybe something to deal with at a better time, say when we have a magic bullet to make it cheap and easy to do.” The cheap and easy we lost it decades ago when this conversation started. And by the time we develop a silver bullet, we will need that too.

And if we don't deal with Climate Change very soon, it will dwarf all other concerns.

As complicated as the details of Climate Change and the responses to it are, it is valuable to remember the goal is simple – More clean energy, less fossil fuel, and an equitable carbon tax to facilitate the transition.

Illinois has already passed a major clean energy bill called FEJA.

The profound nature and value of a carbon tax is already revealing itself in our congress. But the effort to stop investing in fossil fuels is severely lacking. And this puts everything at risk. This means we must end fossil fuel use as soon as possible. That includes all of our personal carbon footprints and our much larger social carbon footprint.

These congregational letters will focus on our social carbon footprint and the need to reach out to other congregations in this effort.

There are many rich and powerful interests involved in investment in fossil fuels and continuing the maximum use for as long as possible. From those who simply want to protect highly skilled

and very valuable jobs to foreign corporations, there is plenty of influence on both sides of our political divide.

Unless and until our elected representatives hear from us, the voice of money for a few will win out over the human rights and the environment for the many. And by the many, we are talking about all of humanity, not just another special interest group. And in this case, we are talking forever, for everything. For everything and everyone we know and love – all of civilization.

Notes for the above:

Excerpts from 2006 Statement of Conscience – UUA.

<https://www.uua.org/action/statements/threat-global-warmingclimate-change>

“We as Unitarian Universalists are called to join with others to halt practices that fuel global warming/climate change, to instigate sustainable alternatives, and to mitigate the impending effects of global warming/climate change with just and ethical responses.

“Leadership, by calling upon the major political parties to develop energy and climate change policies and to make them central topics of debate in state, congressional, and presidential elections

“Given our human capacity to reflect and act upon our own lives as well as the condition of the world, we accept with humility and determination our responsibility to remedy and mitigate global warming/climate change through innovation, cooperation, and self-discipline. We undertake this work for the preservation of life on Earth.”

And from another source:

“Adversity tends to empower demagogues with easy answers, and climate change will bring plenty of adversity.” Kate Marvel -Five Books on Nature and the Environment
<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/climate-change-uncertainty/>

Bill Koehl
Green Sanctuary