



## Equity, Innovation, and Environmental Justice April 13, 2021

Dear Member of the JustFaith Network,

We are grateful that you are a part of our JustFaith community. Whether you are a graduate of one of our programs or you are just getting to know us, we hope this offering will help sustain you spiritually and equip you to work for justice.

In 2021, our bi-monthly resources will typically appear in your inbox on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month, and you can access an archive of past resources by logging into your JustFaith account. You can use these resources for personal reflection, or you can invite your friends, family, Sunday School class, or current or past JFM small group to join you in-person or via videoconferencing. If you are new to video conferencing, Zoom tutorials are available on our YouTube page -- [Click here to access.](#)

While we hope that these twice-monthly resources will inspire and sustain your community while distancing, now is also the perfect time to start one of our [regular programs.](#)

Today's resource speaks to environmental justice (which is highlighted in our eco-justice program series). **If you are doing this resource with a small group, be sure to send out the links to the three articles discussed in this resource ahead of time, and invite members of your group to read AT LEAST ONE of the articles before you come together.**

Last but not least, all of our work is a collaboration with people like you. When you donate, your gift helps us sustain and equip individuals committed to making the world better. [Click here to help out.](#) Also, please feel free to forward this resource to friends and family!

With gratitude,

The JustFaith Ministries Staff



## Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

---

When everyone has dialed in, begin your time together with these or similar words:

Welcome, friends! It's so good to be with all of you, despite that we can't be together in person. Today we'll begin with an opening prayer and spend a few minutes checking in with each other. Then we'll have some conversation around the article(s) you read, before closing in prayer. Most importantly, though, this will be a time to care for one another and to be the community we're called to be.

Let's take a few seconds of silence to pause, to listen to our breathing, and to be present in this space.

*Pause for 30 seconds before beginning the opening prayer.*

### The Garden is Rich

The garden is rich with diversity  
With plants of a hundred families  
In the space between the trees  
With all the colors and fragrances.  
Basil, mint and lavender,  
Great Mystery keep my remembrance pure,  
Raspberry, Apple, Rose,  
Great Mystery fill my heart with love,  
Dill, anise, tansy,  
Holy winds blow in me.  
Rhododendron, zinnia,  
May my prayer be beautiful  
May my remembrance O Great Mystery  
Be as incense to thee  
In the sacred grove of eternity  
As I smell and remember  
The ancient forests of earth.

*- Chinook Psalter*



*Pause for another 30 seconds and then repeat the last four lines of the prayer*

**Be as incense to thee  
In the sacred grove of eternity  
As I smell and remember  
The ancient forests of earth.**

## **Check-In Time (10 minutes or so)**

---

Ask these open-ended questions. If you are by yourself, journal about them.

*Note: If you are with a group, these questions have the potential to take up a lot of time. Some weeks may require more check-in time than others, depending on the needs of the group. To provide a shorter yet meaningful check-in time, choose ONE of the questions below, and ask participants to share a ONE sentence response.*

- **Before we begin this week's reflection, let's take a few minutes to check in. How is everyone feeling?** (It will be a bit more difficult via phone to know if someone is being talked over or is trying to get a word in.... Be sure everyone has a chance to speak).
- **What is something you're struggling with this week?**
- **Where have you seen a sign of hope this week?**

*Other optional questions include: What is something you've learned about yourself during this time of social distancing? Where have you experienced a "thin place" in the last week? Where have you seen beauty this week? What is one new behavior you'd like to continue doing when the virus has passed us by?*

## **Reflection (15 minutes or so)**

---

Members of your group should have read at least one of these articles:

Using Urban Forestry to Fight for Environmental Justice:

<https://www.greenbiz.com/article/using-urban-forestry-fight-environmental-justice>

How the Just Label Elevates Equity from the Ground Up:

<https://www.greenbiz.com/article/how-just-label-elevates-equity-ground>



The World-Changing Potential of STEAM-Powered Youth:

<https://www.greenbiz.com/article/world-changing-potential-steam-powered-youth>

Reflect on/Invite members of your group to share their responses to these questions:

*(Note: If someone has read more than one article, ask her/him to only share a response to one of the articles until everyone else has had a chance to share.)*

1. In the article on urban forestry, Greg McPherson, founder of the Center for Urban Forest Research says, “The trees in our neighborhoods tell a story about our society – one of equity. The story we’re trying to craft is one in which living in a city is healthy, equitable and connected with nature.” What story do the trees (or lack of trees) tell about your own neighborhood? City?
2. In the article on the “Just Label,” Shawn Hesse, Director of Business Development for the International Living Future Institute (ILFI), says, “What we’re seeing is that people are recognizing that we can’t just count on the environmental benefits of our actions to cause social co-benefits and call it a day. We actually have to focus on equity issues as much as we focus on solving climate change, and we can solve both of those at the same time.” What are other ways addressing equity can impact climate change?
3. In the article on STEAM-powered youth, Danielle Boyer, indigenous activist, author and inventor, says, “Showing kids that they can use their skills right now affects how they see themselves and their potential impact, and everyone needs to play an active role in our Earth. We need people to design robots that clean up oil spills. I believe in doing more than just advocating for a solution, but also being an active part of creating ones, too.” What are some of the ways technology and innovation are providing solutions to the climate crisis?

If you have time, invite responses to these other questions:

4. How do the articles impact your thinking about solutions to the climate crisis?
5. What ideas did the articles give you about advocating for care of the earth in your local community?

## Announcements (5-10 minutes)

- 
- Remind participants that today’s conversation offered only a brief insight into a huge topic. If they would like to take a deeper dive into this subject matter, they should



consider one of the two 8-week programs that compose JustFaith Ministries eco-justice series (a third one will be available in 2022).

- Let participants know that the materials for this gathering were free, put together by the JustFaith Ministries staff in order to equip more people for the work of peace and justice. In order to support the creation of more resources and programs, participants are encouraged to donate to JustFaith Ministries through [justfaith.org](http://justfaith.org).
- JustFaith Ministries is currently hosting a monthly webinar series called “Acting for Justice While Sheltering in Place,” in which an expert on a justice-related topic will offer tips for taking action during COVID-19. Join us for a special edition of “Acting for Justice” on Monday, April 19, at 2:30 p.m. EDT as Susie Tierney, Executive Director of JFM & Rev. Kristin Dollar, Director of Programs at JFM give a Zoom presentation on “Bringing Eco-Justice Education to your Congregation and Moving your Church to Action.” This presentation is part of Ecumenical Advocacy Days, a national gathering of churches and organizations working on justice of which JustFaith Ministries is a sponsor. [Register today through EAD](#).
- Are there any opportunities for action or advocacy happening in your community this week? Invite participants to share ways to support the work of local groups working for justice or care for the environment.

## Closing Prayer (10 minutes-ish)

---

Then say: **Before we join in the closing prayer, let us pause to acknowledge the presence of the Holy Spirit, who is as close as our very breath.**

*Pause for 30 seconds. Then share this prayer:*

Creator God,  
breath and source of life,  
in love you called the world into being  
and in grace you made us and call us your children.  
We stand in awe of the wonder of your creation:  
its beauty and wildness;  
complexity and power;  
resilience and fragility.

God of life,  
you call us to be participants in the web and wellspring of life:  
to be nurtured by the planet;  
to be nurturing of the planet;



to cherish the world and all that lives.  
But we have failed and creation groans under our weight.

God of grace,  
forgive us in our brokenness:  
when we have taken too much from the earth;  
when we have not spoken out against greed and destruction;  
when we have allowed our most vulnerable neighbors to be harmed.  
We seek courage and forgiveness to be made whole.

God of love,  
we pray for those people, communities and nations already suffering the  
devastating effects of climate change; and we pray for the diversity of life  
on earth, so much of it already threatened by our actions.

God of hope,  
we pray for the members of government (parliament) who receive our  
petition  
Bless them with wisdom and creativity, and a shared vision of hope for all  
creation.  
May they find the determination  
to take strong action to halt the destructive effects of climate change, and  
the political will to act together for the common good.

Creator God,  
we pray for us all,  
that we might restore our relationships with each other and work together  
to heal the earth.  
Renew us in your grace  
for the sake of your creation. Amen.

<https://www.unitingjustice.org.au/environment/information-and-action-resources/item/1231-prayer-for-climate-action>

Then, in these words, invite any participants who have a prayer, a concern, or a request to briefly share it:

**We are disciples on a journey.**

**We are the body of Christ, broken for the world.**

**We hold one another as we carry the concerns of our neighbors.**

**If you feel moved, please share your prayer aloud.**

Leader: We pray also for the members of the JustFaith community across the country.  
Unite us through the power of your Holy Spirit, that together we might



participate with you in the building of your Kingdom, in order to create a more just and peaceful world. Amen.