



Advocating for a Federal Clean Energy Standard May 25, 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.

Our bi-monthly resources will 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 video conferencing. 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. This resource highlights themes found in JustFaith Ministries' 8-session program called "Sacred Air: Climate and Energy." For more information, click [here](#); scroll down to the square labeled "Eco-justice," and click on "Sacred Air."

IMPORTANT: Today's resource is a bit different from our usual offerings, and it may not be for everyone. Many members of our JustFaith community have requested more tools for taking action around issues they care about, so we thought we'd give this action-oriented resource a try. Here are a few important things to note if you're planning to invite others to engage in this resource with you:

1. This resource is geared toward those who have participated in the JustFaith Ministries' eco-justice series OR have a cursory knowledge of the climate crisis and its relevance to our faith. You may need to be selective about who you invite to this particular gathering.



2. You will spend the bulk of your time together encouraging your elected officials to support a federal Clean Energy Standard. Your guests should only attend your gathering if they are comfortable with this activity.
3. It will be crucial that participants watch the [preparational video](#) before your gathering. They can also check out the optional resources listed below if they like.

Below is a draft message you can copy and paste into the email you will send your guests ahead of time:

Hi friends,

Lately I've been concerned about the climate crisis, so when JustFaith Ministries sent out a resource that would guide me in taking action around a federal Clean Energy Standard, I welcomed the opportunity to learn more and speak out. Would you be interested in joining me in writing to our elected officials to advocate for clean energy?

If you're interested, we'll be meeting on (name time and location or video conferencing platform). We'll begin with a meditation, do a brief check-in, come up with some points to address in our letters or emails to our elected officials, and write our letters or emails before closing with prayer.

Though you certainly don't have to be an expert in order to express your opinion to your elected officials, it will be important that you arrive at our gathering prepared to discuss the push for a federal Clean Energy Standard. At the very least, you should watch the video on [this webpage](#) before the gathering.

Other optional resources include:

- Enter your email address on the same webpage as above ([click here](#)) to download a comprehensive report on the Clean Energy Standard.
- [“This Popular and Proven Climate Policy Should Be at the Top of Congress’s To-Do List”](#) from Vox
- The podcast episode [“Can the U.S Win Back Its Climate Credibility?”](#) by *The New York Times’ The Daily*

If relevant, copy/paste Zoom access information here.

Let me know if you have any questions, or if you are interested in joining with me in speaking out for clean energy on (date)!



Sincerely, (your name).

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 (10 minutes)

Pull up the opening video and play through the ad ahead of time. Turn on closed captions by clicking “cc” at the bottom of the video screen. The video is set to begin at 21 seconds. Start [here](#).

When everyone has joined your meeting, begin your time together with these or similar words:

Welcome, friends! It’s so good to be with all of you to lift our voices around clean energy, an issue that is important to us and to our faith. Today we’ll spend some time discussing points we would like to address with our elected officials. Then we’ll write our letters or emails before closing in prayer.

We’ll begin by watching a video by poet laureate Amanda Gorman and engaging in a short reflection activity. This will be a time of spiritual preparation for advocacy work, as well as a taste of a resource included in the JustFaith Ministries 8-session program Sacred Air: Climate and Energy, which is one way we might consider continuing the conversation we’ll have today.

But first, let’s take a few seconds of silence to pause, to feel the sacred air of God’s breath fill our lungs, and to be present in this space.

Pause for 30 seconds. Then share your screen (if applicable).

Play “24 hours of Reality: ‘Earthrise’ by Amanda Gorman”:
<https://youtu.be/92XFWAoJn6w?t=21>

Repeat the last stanza of Gorman’s poem:

“All of us bring light to exciting solutions never tried before



*For it is our hope that implores us, at our uncompromising core,
To keep rising up for an earth more than worth fighting for.”*

What is it – and who is it – that moves you to rise up for the earth?

Take a minute or two to silently make a list of the people, places, or elements of God’s creation that inspire you to rise up for the earth by taking action. For example, this list might include your grandchildren, your favorite environmental activist, clean air, or a place in nature you love to visit. When you are finished, take a moment to rest in love and gratitude for each item on your list.

Pause for 3 minutes.

Then ask participants to briefly share what came to mind during the silent reflection. Ask a volunteer to begin, who will invite someone else to share. Continue in this fashion until all have had a chance to respond. Close with the following words:

As we continue in our time together, may our love for the world inspire and shape our action. Amen.

Preparation (30 minutes or so)

Members of your group should have watched this video:

<https://collaborative.evergreenaction.com/policy-hub/100-clean>

Guide the group a conversation around the following questions. Optionally, you can take notes on a whiteboard or easel pad (if you are meeting in person) or on a Word or Google document using screen sharing (if you are meeting virtually).

- Ask for a volunteer to recap what the federal Clean Energy Standard is and why it’s important. Then ask if anyone else has anything to add.
- On a personal level, how might a Clean Energy Standard impact you or your community?
- How does advocating for clean energy connect with the principles of your faith?
- Describe how this effort connects with racial and economic justice.

Then ask:

- If participants are from the same community, ask: We are getting ready to write to our elected officials. Do you know of any background on our elected officials’ histories on environmental advocacy?
- What are some key points you might address in your letters to your elected officials?



- Are there elected officials outside of your state or district that it would be helpful to contact? (For example, the optional podcast resource *The Daily* mentioned that West Virginia Senator Joe Manchin will play a crucial role in the decision).

Close the discussion by reading paragraphs 1 and 2 of *Laudato Si* by Pope Francis:

1. *“LAUDATO SI’, mi’ Signore” - “Praise be to you, my Lord”. In the words of this beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. “Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs”.*

2. *This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she “groans in travail” (Rom 8:22). We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.*

Let us pause for silent reflection.

Pause for 30 seconds.

Conclude with this statement:

In response to our discussion and to the words of Pope Francis, we now will take collective action by advocating for clean energy. But first, a few announcements:

Announcements (5-10 minutes)

- If you would like to continue the conversation around climate, you might consider JustFaith Ministries’ 8-session program called Sacred Air: Climate and Energy. For more information, click [here](#); scroll down to the square labeled “Eco-justice,” and click on Sacred Air.
- JustFaith Ministries is currently hosting a monthly webinar series called “Acting for Justice,” in which an expert on a justice-related topic will offer tips for taking action. On Thursday, June 24, Passionist priest, Joe Mitchell, will give a presentation entitled,



““Seeds of Hope for Our Planet: Thomas Berry and the Great Work.” Click [here](#) to register.

- Let participants know that the materials for this gathering were free, put together by the JustFaith Ministries staff to equip more people for the work of peace and justice. To support the creation of more resources and programs, participants are encouraged to donate to JustFaith Ministries through justfaith.org.
- 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.

Letter-Writing (20-30 minutes)

Invite participants to begin writing letters or emails to their elected officials (they can also call, if they prefer phone). A few notes:

- Participants can use the template in Attachment A if they like. If you are meeting virtually, scroll down and share your screen.
- If you are meeting virtually, we recommend inviting participants to keep their videos on, as you are engaging in this effort as an act of solidarity with one another.
- Contact information for senators can be found here: <https://www.senate.gov/senators/senators-contact.htm>
- Contact information for House representatives can be found here: <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>

After your designated time is up, call the group back together for the closing prayer.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Find four volunteers to help read the closing prayer in a few minutes. Then say: **Before we join in the closing prayer, let us pause again to rest in gratitude for the people, places, and elements of God’s creation that move us to action.**

Pause for 30 seconds. Share your screen.

Read aloud paragraphs 243-245 of *Laudato Si* by Pope Francis:

243. *At the end, we will find ourselves face to face with the infinite beauty of God (cf. 1 Cor 13:12) and be able to read with admiration and happiness the mystery of the universe, which with us will share in unending plenitude. Even now we are journeying towards the sabbath of eternity, the new Jerusalem, towards our common home in heaven. Jesus says: “I make all things new” (Rev 21:5). Eternal life will be a shared experience of awe, in which each creature, resplendently transfigured, will take its rightful place and have something to give those poor men and women who will have been liberated once and for all.*

244. *In the meantime, we come together to take charge of this home which has been entrusted to us, knowing that all the good which exists here will be taken up into the heavenly feast. In union with all creatures, we journey through this land seeking God, for “if the world has a beginning and if it has been created, we must enquire who gave it this beginning, and who was its Creator”.^[172] Let us sing as we go. May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope.*

245. *God, who calls us to generous commitment and to give him our all, offers us the light and the strength needed to continue on our way. In the heart of this world, the Lord of life, who loves us so much, is always present. He does not abandon us, he does not leave us alone, for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward. **Praise be to him!***

Close with this prayer, which comes from paragraph 246 of *Laudato Si*:

Reader 1: All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

Reader 2: O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.



Reader 3: Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.

Reader 4: We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace. Amen.

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.



Attachment A: Template for Email/Letter Writing

Dear Senator/Representative _____,

Paragraph 1: Introduce yourself in 1-2 sentences. Then give a one-sentence statement that makes a specific ask (for example, I'm asking you to support a federal Clean Energy Standard).

Paragraph 2: Write 2-4 sentences about why you care about this issue: how does it affect you, your community, or other people you love? You can cite a few compelling facts, but personal stories are often particularly powerful.

Paragraph 2: Write 2-4 sentences about why this issue is important to the values of your faith.

Paragraph 3: Reiterate your initial ask.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Optional: Your street address

Your city, state, and zip code

Your email address



Attachment B: Closing Prayer

For the sake of the environment, we encourage you not to print unless you absolutely have to!

- Reader 1: All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
- Reader 2: O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
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Touch the hearts
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- Reader 3: Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.
- Reader 4: We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
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