



Earth Day 2011: Sacred Waters

40 Days of Commitment,
40 UUs in Your Congregation



Information on the 40/40 for Earth Challenge

How the 40/40 for Earth Challenge works. For the 40 days from Sunday, April 17, through Thursday, May 26, UUs across the country will commit to actions large and small for the sake of the Earth and all who live here. When **40 people** in one congregation make **40-day pledges**, that congregation will be included in the roll of participating congregations. If 40 people seem too ambitious (or not ambitious enough!) a congregation may substitute 40 percent of average worship attendance. See the list of **40/40 sample actions** on the Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth (UUMFE) website to get some ideas. There are no "rules" for the 40/40 for Earth Challenge – be creative and have fun!

Getting started. Start planning now to kick off the campaign during worship and religious education on **Earth Day Sunday** on April 17. Identify others in your congregation who might like to participate, including ministers and staff. You will find a **Sunday Service Kit** and other resources on the UUMFE website. As a conversation starter during the 40 days, give those who accept the 40/40 for Earth Challenge a sticker or ribbon for their nametags. Your congregation can support participants and build community by hosting a special potluck or environmental justice event in conjunction with your service on April 17, on Earth Day itself, or at the campaign's end. At the end of the 40-day challenge, gather participants together to share stories – what they learned, what worked well and what did not, how their perspectives changed, and what comes next, as individuals and as a congregation.

Why water? As Unitarian Universalists, we are called to respect the interdependent web of all existence and water is a common thread. Water's both life-giving and life-taking qualities have made it an important symbol in many of our world's religious traditions. UUs all over are already thinking about water justice issues – from the Human Right to Water to the impacts of natural gas hydraulic fracturing on watersheds. Many environmental justice issues, from immigration to climate change, deeply impact water. The impacts of these water issues most adversely affect those traditionally oppressed, including women, the poor, and people of color. Examine issues of water justice in your own community. Think about how water justice intersects with issues on which you're already working.

Go beyond your congregation's walls. Local and national media look for stories to run on Earth Day, April 22. See the **Spread the Word** page on the UUMFE website for tips on media and messaging for Earth Day. Be sure to register your plans on the UUMFE website – we will maintain a list of all activities so you can see what other congregations are doing. Throughout the 40 days, share your stories and photos on the 40/40 Facebook page: <http://on.fb.me/fb4040>. With your permission, UUMFE may use your stories and photos on its website, in future newsletters, or in UUA publications.

How it started. Last year, the Ethical Eating Core Team introduced the 40/40/40 for the Earth campaign as a way to expand Earth Day to 40 days in honor of the 40th anniversary of Earth Day, through commitments to action for environmental justice by 40 people in a congregation. Earth Day is a great opportunity to renew our commitment to our planet and to each other. Although the 40th anniversary of Earth Day last year has come and gone, UUMFE encourages congregations to build on the popularity and success of this campaign through an annual **40/40 for Earth Challenge**.

With input from the UUA, UU Service Committee, Ethical Eating Core Team, Clean Water Action, and the Coalition for Waste Water Treatment, UUMFE has developed a series of resources to help congregations celebrate the sacred waters that sustain us all this Earth Day and to commit to actions that will make our world more just. All resources are available on the UUMFE website: <http://uuministryforearth.org/2011-ED-MainPage>. If you have any questions, please e-mail envirojustice@uuministryforearth.

The generosity of individual donors and members make the work of UU Ministry for Earth possible. Please consider making a donation today to help us continue this important endeavor. Thank you.