



Earth Day 2011: Sacred Waters

40 Days of Commitment,
40 UUs in Your Congregation



Sunday Service Kit for the 40/40 for Earth Challenge

This reflection, responsive reading, and 40/40 for Earth pledge will be shared in hundreds of UU congregations on Earth Sunday, April 17. Download a printable version of the reading and pledge to include as an insert in your order of service: <http://www.uumfe.org/files/40-40-Reading-Pledge.doc>. You may also download the 40/40 for Earth sample actions document to insert. Adapt the materials to suit the needs of your congregation.

Worship Leader's Introduction

This Friday, the world celebrates Earth Day. Today, our congregation joins hundreds of Unitarian Universalist congregations across the continent in examining issues of water justice and putting our faith into action, and turning a one-day celebration, Earth Day, into a 40-day call to action – the 40/40 for Earth Challenge.

Water is a common thread of all life, which is one of the reasons water is viewed as sacred by so many people and religions around the world. UUs across the country are working for water justice, from congregations seeking the Human Right to Water in California to those supporting the people affected by the BP Oil Disaster one year ago off the Gulf of Mexico.

Over the next 40 days, large and small actions by Unitarian Universalists will honor the Earth and work toward justice for those most impacted by pollution and environmental degradation. And if 40 or more in this congregation accept the challenge and adopt for 40 days some new action for the sake of the Earth and all who live on it, _____ [name of congregation] will receive special recognition from the UU Ministry for Earth.

Forty is a number with religious resonance for people of many faith backgrounds. For Earth Day, our own living tradition invites young people and adults alike to take up something good, as an expression of our shared values. Whatever your beliefs, this campaign presents each of us with a great opportunity to make positive change in community. For sample actions, see your order of service [referring to the "Sample Actions" document at <http://www.uumfe.org/files/40-40-Sample-Actions.doc>].

How could your family spend some small part of the next 40 days learning about water justice, caring for the Earth, supporting sustainability in its vital ecosystems, and honoring the people & non-human animals who inhabit it?

We know that our personal choices have effects that reach all the way around the world. Let us therefore reflect deeply on what we could do in the next 40 days to move us closer to living our values of both the interdependent web of all existence and the inherent worth and dignity of all people. Maybe just one small step. Many of us have in the back of our mind a large or small way we have considered changing, which for some reason we never quite get around to.

Let us now take a moment of silence to reflect on what lifestyle change we might adopt, as a bold experiment, for the next 40 days, for the sake of the Earth and all who live on it. [After substantial period of silence:] From the state of introspection we now rise, as we are able, to read from our orders of service *A Declaration of Interdependence*:

Responsive Reading: A Declaration of Interdependence

Leader: We believe it is imperative to care for the Earth, its vital ecosystems and all living beings who inhabit it.

Congregation: *We are relational creatures, capable of both good and evil.*

Leader: We have experienced enough brokenness, within and beyond ourselves, to seek the power of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Congregation: *We are called to make choices that help to heal and transform ourselves and the world, and to move toward solidarity with all beings.*

Leader: Why? Because we believe it is our responsibility to be stewards of the Earth and mindful of the impacts of our choices on communities around us.

Congregation: *We believe in the beauty and renewing power of nature.*

Leader: In response, we become more willing to replace the desire to consume with the responsibility to sustain. In this way,

Congregation: *We recognize the need for discipline as we build a world that is both just and sustainable.*

Leader: We are called to be stewards, working cooperatively with dignity and humility to make whole the parts of our interdependent web that have been broken or damaged.

All: *As we manifest this vision, may we cast ever widening circles of compassion.*

Leader: Take a moment to consider the 40/40 Pledge on the insert in your order of service [Silence]. I will take this pledge; will you join me? If you are so moved, say with me:

40/40 for Earth Pledge

Congregation: *As an expression of our Unitarian Universalist values, we pledge to change aspects of our lives and behaviors for 40 days, for the sake of the Earth and all who live on it.*

Leader: May it be so.

Congregation: *Amen.*

Sending Forth

Leader: In this spirit, may we intentionally live our commitment to honor the inherent dignity and worth of every person and preserve the interdependent web of existence of which we are a part.

Further Information:

For *extensive* resources related to Earth Day, water, and environmental justice, see the UU Ministry for Earth's 2011 Earth Day pages, beginning with <http://bit.ly/earthday2011>. Worship resources are available. Be sure to register your Earth Day plans (<http://bit.ly/4040registration>). After Earth Day and your 40/40 for Earth Challenge, share stories from your congregation's experience on the same registration form and send us your photos: envirojustice@uuministryforearth.org.

The materials in this Sunday Service Kit were adapted from those developed for Earth Day 2010 by the UUA Congregational Study/Action Issue "Ethical Eating: Food & Environmental Justice" Core Team, John Gibb Millspaugh, Chair.

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.