

Counting down to International Climate Action Day, Oct. 24: A message from Bishop Bud Cederholm

I am hopeful, prayerful and excited to call your attention to the International Day of Climate Action on Oct. 24. I am asking that Episcopal congregations and leaders join with citizens around the world on that day in an act of awareness, inspiration and prophetic witness, sending a message to world leaders to sign a strong climate change treaty this December in Copenhagen. Read on for more background and ideas about what you can do.

What is known about climate change?

Climate scientists have determined that human activity, especially the burning of fossil fuels, has increased the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to 390 parts per million (ppm). Historical evidence shows that levels over 350 ppm cause dramatic changes in the earth's climate and computer models based on today's measurements forecast rising sea levels, increasingly severe weather patterns, impacts on food production and changing patterns of disease that will inflict intense hardship on billions of people around the world.

Why focus on it now?

Scientists have concluded that if we make significant reductions in CO2 emissions now, we can avert the worst of these impacts. In December, world leaders will convene in Copenhagen to agree to a treaty to succeed the Kyoto Protocol. The treaty must hold all nations accountable for doing their part to meet strict carbon emission limits. Oct. 24 is a time when the citizens of the world have the chance to send a message that they insist on a strong treaty that will succeed in bringing CO2 levels back down to 350 ppm.

What does this have to do with the church?

The good earth which God created and supplied with all manner of life is in danger, and all of us—human, animal and plant life—will suffer. Those who will suffer the most are those who are already on the fringes—the poor and powerless. As Christians, we are called to tend the “garden,” earth, and watch over it; we are also called to serve the “least of these my brothers and sisters” and so serve Christ. We honor God by cherishing what God has made and loves. This summer the General Convention adopted seven resolutions committing the Episcopal Church to better stewardship of creation (<http://gc2009.org/ViewLegislation>).



How can my parish be involved?

- Incorporate environmental stewardship themes into your worship on Oct. 25: www.gipl.org/worship.html.
- Ring your church bell 350 times.
- Encourage the congregation to sign the online Interfaith Call for 350 at www.350.org/interfaithcall.
- Attend the Climate Convocation on Oct. 18, 2 p.m., at Memorial Church, Harvard University to hear 350.org founder Bill McKibben present the case for strong international action to reduce carbon emissions. More information is at www.mipandl.org.
- Reach out to other faiths and organizations to create a community event like an ecumenical worship service or a community discussion about what the town can do to decrease its carbon footprint.
- Hold a discussion or adult education session to consider the questions: In a world of climate change, what does being a steward of creation look like? What does loving our neighbor look like?
- Put on a “Climate Theater” event, using a script available from the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ (e-mail sordillow@macucc.org).

Whatever you decide to do, post your event at www.350.org/faith to add your action to the almost 1,400 actions in 104 countries already planned. This is the most visible way for world leaders to know the breadth of support for strong climate action.

For more ideas:

www.350.org

www.ncccojustice.org/index.php

www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=127683112185