



LENT 2020 Carbon Fast -February 26th- April 9th

The spiritual practice of fasting, accompanied by prayer and meditation, moves us to be more open to the will of God in our lives. Fasting helps us listen to what God wants us to be and to do. During Lent this year, UCC Missoula invites you to try a “fast from carbon,” that is, to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide you put into the atmosphere.

Why should you consider a fast from carbon? There are at least five reasons:

1. The carbon dioxide we are putting into the environment, in the form of greenhouse gases, is changing the climate of God’s creation, our planet Earth. Scientists no longer debate the basic facts of climate change.
2. The sources of these greenhouse gases are largely produced by human beings and the society we have created.
3. The largest component of greenhouse gases is carbon dioxide, which comes from the burning of fossil fuels during the generation of electricity and from the modes of transportation that we use.
4. Unless we reduce our emissions of greenhouse gases, the impact of these increases will be devastating for our planet, for its people—especially the poor and vulnerable—and for the plants and animals that have lived here for millions of years. Time is critical.
5. God created this Earth, declared it to be good, and expects us to care for creation and to maintain its goodness for future generations.

While we are heavily dependent on carbon, a “fast from carbon” is not as hard as you might think. We can use these seven reflections to consider the amount of carbon dioxide we each generate and to commit to reducing that amount.

For your “fast from carbon,” we have prepared seven spiritual reflections (Ash Wednesday and the six Sundays of Lent) which include the following:

- information on global warming in Montana — forecasted impacts and local opportunities for activism;
- a statement by the faith community;
- a scripture reading followed by a prayer: and
- actions for individuals to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide generated.

Interactive Ash Wednesday Service at UCC is Feb. 26th at 7:00 PM, in collaboration with Emmaus Campus Ministry.

Holy Week

Thursday, April 9—Maundy Thursday Footwashing 5:30 p.m. Dinner 6:00 p.m. Tenebrae Service 7:00 p.m.

Friday April 10—Good Friday UCC Chancel Choir performs *The Seven Last Words of Christ* by Théodore Dubois Edited by Hal H. Hopson

Saturday April 11—Holy Saturday - Go Outside!

Sunday April 12th—Easter Sunday - Sunrise Service 7:30 a.m. Traditional Service 10:00 a.m.

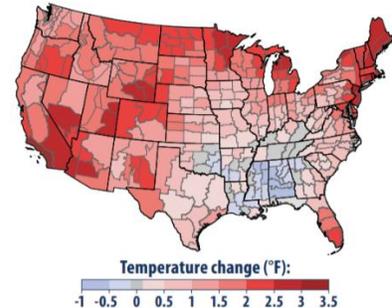


Ash Wednesday (February 26th)

Service @ 7 PM at UCC

Impact of climate change on Montana:

“Montana’s climate is changing. In the past century, most of the state has warmed about two degrees (F). Heat waves are becoming more common, and snow is melting earlier in spring. Rising temperatures and recent droughts have killed many trees by drying out soils, increasing the risk of forest fires, or enabling outbreaks of forest insects. In the coming decades, the changing climate is likely to decrease the availability of water in Montana, affect agricultural yields, and further increase the risk of wildfires. As the climate warms, less precipitation falls as snow, and more snow melts during winter. That decreases snowpack—the amount of snow that accumulates over the winter. Since the 1950s, the snowpack in Montana has been decreasing. Diminishing snowpack can shorten the season for skiing and other forms of winter tourism and recreation. The tree line may shift, a higher tree line would decrease the extent of alpine tundra ecosystems, which could threaten some species.” (EPA 430-F-16-028, *What Climate Change Means for Montana*)



Rising temperatures in the last century. Montana has warmed more than most of the contiguous United States. Source: EPA, Climate Change Indicators in the United States.

Statement by the faith community: UCC’s Creation Justice Covenant

“Climate crisis is an urgent, all-encompassing, worldwide emergency.

In affirming the divine gifts of creation and in affirming our connection to God, each other, and the world around us, we unconditionally commit ourselves as individuals and as a congregation to the intertwined responsibilities of caring for creation and seeking justice for the oppressed.

With purposeful resolve, we commit ourselves with an awareness of how the abuses of creation inevitably cause human suffering and of how factors such as race, class, and global inequality inevitably cause some to suffer more than others. Furthermore, as humanity confronts the current and future crisis of damage to the climate, the Earth, and all creatures, we commit ourselves with an urgent sense of calling.

We desire that these deeply felt commitments be reflected in all the dimensions of our congregation’s life. We commit to launch ourselves beyond the walls of our church to make good on our promises to God our Creator, to Jesus the Redeemer of Creation, and to the Holy Spirit the Sustainer of Creation.

It is vitally important for us as persons of faith to care for the creation given to all living beings by the first light of existence. The world is of God, from God and within it we are a part of the love of creation. What we do with each moment on Earth impacts us all. (adopted by UCC Missoula, September 15, 2019)

Scripture Reading: Joel 2:12-13 Yet even now says the Lord, return to me with your whole heart. With fasting, and weeping and mourning; rend your hearts, not your garments, And return to the Lord, your God. For gracious and merciful is God, slow to anger, rich in kindness, And relenting in punishment.

Prayer: Gracious and merciful God, as we “fast from carbon,” grant us the humility and the inspiration to move through authentic mourning for the destruction of so much of your creation. Move us to accept our obligation to restore your creation, and to act with love and care for all that you call sacred.

Actions:

- Change your light bulbs: Replacing one incandescent light bulb with a compact fluorescent light saves 150 pounds of carbon dioxide a year (up to 730 pounds over the life of the CFL).
- Adjust your thermostat down 2 degrees in winter and 2 degrees up in summer, and you’ll fast from about 2,000 pounds of carbon dioxide.
- Join a small group to reflect further and support others along the carbon fast journey during Lent. Contact laura@uccofmissoula.org to register.



First Week in Lent (March 1st- March 7th)

Impact of climate change on food production

“Consider these key climatic changes and how they stand to affect food:

- *More extreme weather can harm livestock and crops.* Major storms have always devastated farms, whether from damaging winds during a storm, or erosion and landslides, now they’re becoming even more common. In spring 2018, unusually heavy rain and snowstorms caused massive flooding across the U.S. Midwest, leaving some areas 10 feet deep in sand resulting delayed spring planting.
- Water scarcity makes it more expensive and difficult to sustain crops and livestock. Drought is in the long-term outlook across the U.S. West, with declining snowpack making it more challenging to keep reservoirs full through summer.
- Growing seasons are starting earlier and getting hotter. A longer growing season, could have some advantages, but it also presents more obstacles in the short term, such as an uptick in pest populations. Early spring onset can also cause crops to grow before the soil holds enough water and nutrients, or ruin fruit crops that bud early and then experience spring frost.
- Food production is also actively contributing to climate change. According to IPCC’s land use report, agriculture and other land uses comprise more than one-fifth of global CO2 emissions. Furthermore, the IPCC reports 25 to 30 percent of the food produced worldwide is wasted accounting for about 10 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions from food systems.” <https://www.yaleclimateconnections.org/2019/09/a-brief-guide-to-the-impacts-of-climate-change-on-food-production/Yale> 20 Oct 2019 Accessed 04 February 2020.

Statement by the faith community: Presbyterian USA

“Global Warming is likely to increase hunger. It will hit the poor hardest. Climate change (or global warming) is already affecting and will dramatically impact food production patterns...

We are called as Christians to love our neighbors and how we, individually and corporately, react to climate change and our own role in causing global warming demonstrates this witness to God. While the link may not appear obvious at first, reducing our energy use, particularly our use of fossil fuels, is one way of demonstrating our love for our neighbors.” (From the Presbyterian Hunger Program, 2006, <http://www.pcusa.org/environment/climate-change.htm>)

Scripture Reading: Genesis 2:8-9 Then the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and placed there the human whom he had formed. Out of the ground the Lord God made various trees grow that were delightful to look at and good for food, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Prayer: God of all, instill in us the knowledge that we are called upon to tend and care for your garden. Grant us the wisdom to cultivate it for the good of all, so that all your creatures may be fed from the bounty of your creation as we insure that even those without access may be nourished.

Actions:

- Go meat-free and/or cheese-free for a day or a week. See our menus to give you delicious meal ideas.
- Research Transition Streets Missoula <https://www.transitionmissoula.org/>.
- Reduce waste. Avoid buying products with a lot of packaging. You can fast from 1,200 pounds of carbon dioxide per year if you cut down your garbage by 10%. Use your own canvas bags.

At UCC:

- March 4th -Write to Fight Climate Change, ImagineNation Brewing Co, 6-8 p.m. with Missoula Rises Civic Action Group. Write a letter to a public leader, with Laura Folkwein and Peggy Schmidt
- March 7th starting at 11:00 a.m. participate in the Home Resources Fix-It Clinic. Register at <http://bit.ly/fixitcheckin> or at church.



Second Week in Lent (March 8th - March 14th)

Impact of climate change on Agriculture in Montana:

“Rising temperatures and changes in rainfall are likely to have both positive and negative effects on Montana’s farms and ranches, and the net effect is unknown. Higher temperatures reduce yields of wheat, but higher concentrations of carbon dioxide may increase yields. Warmer and shorter winters may allow for a longer growing season, which could allow two crops per year instead of one in some instances. But warmer winters may also promote the growth of weeds and pests. Warmer winters could also benefit ranches by reducing losses to winter storms. But warmer summers would at least partly offset the benefit of warmer winters, because hot weather causes cows to eat less and grow more slowly, and it can threaten their health. Over the next 70 years, the number of days above 100°F in Montana is likely to double.” (EPA 430-F-16-028, *What Climate Change Means for Montana*)

Statement by the faith community: Orthodox

“It is our understanding, the way we relate to nature as creation directly reflects the way we relate to God as Creator. There can be no distinction between concern for human welfare, protection of the environment, and care for our salvation. In order to restore the planet, we need a spirituality that brings humility and respect with regard to our attitudes and actions, our life choices and lifestyles. It should be abundantly clear by now that we must direct our focus away from what we want, to what the planet needs. Dear friends, we must of course remain optimistic—confident in the love of God and hopeful in the response of humankind. But when will we understand how important it is to leave as light a footprint as possible on this planet for the sake of future generations? The truth is that we can no longer afford to wait; indecision and inaction are not options. Faith makes it clear that we have a choice. The time to choose is now. (2018, Message from His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Eastern Orthodox)

Scripture Reading: Psalm 121:1-2 I raise my eyes toward the mountains. From where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord. The maker of heaven and earth.

Prayer: Creator of all, we are called to worship you with all our being and actions and to treat your creation as sacred. Give us the insight we need to reject “false gospels” that encourage consumption patterns that are destructive to the web of life. Amen.

Actions:

- Buy and eat locally produced food when you can. The average U.S. food product travels 1500 to 2500 miles to get to your table. You can fast from 500 pounds of carbon dioxide by supplying 25% of your food from local sources.
- Plant a tree. A single tree will absorb one ton of carbon dioxide over its lifetime. Resolve to celebrate “new life” by nurturing your trees and planting new ones!
- Put out some bird food. Birds will almost certainly find it wherever the location. Enjoy the gift of these and other creatures on God’s Earth.
- Watch a movie, film or documentary about faithful environmentalism and/or energy & climate change, such as Kilowatt Ours: A Plan to Re-Energize America:
<https://www.cultureunplugged.com/documentary/watch-online/festival/play/7557/Kilowatt-Ours>.

At UCC: March 8th after worship, join us for a low carbon lunch in the Fireside Room.

March 11, 6:00 p.m. A service of lament and healing for the earth with Judith Holloway and Laura Folkwein.



Third Week in Lent (March 15th - March 22nd)

Impact of climate change on wildfires in Montana

Higher temperatures and drought are likely to increase the severity, frequency, and extent of wildfires in Montana, which could harm property, livelihoods, and human health. On average, about 2 percent of the land in the state has burned per decade since 1984. Wildfire smoke pollutes the air and can increase medical visits for respiratory and heart problems. (*EPA 430-F-16-028, What Climate Change Means for Montana*)

Statement by the faith community: United Church of Christ

On June 24th, 2019, the national deliberative body of the United Church of Christ (the 32nd General Synod) became the first U.S. Christian body to endorse the Green New Deal. The UCC statement “recognizes the scale and immediacy of the climate crisis, the urgent need to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible, and the moral obligation to embrace the unprecedented socio-economic changes that we must effect and engage as opportunities to create fair paying jobs, secure clean air and water, redress manifestations of environmental racism and pursue a just transition to clean and renewable energy.” Read the entire text of the resolution here:

<https://ucceverywhere.org/synod/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Comm.-15-Supporting-the-Green-New-Deal-FINAL-Post-Plenary.pdf>

Scripture Reading: Psalm 95:1-5

Come let us sing joyfully to the Lord, cry out to the rock of our salvation. Let us greet God with a song of praise, joyfully sing out our psalms. For the Lord is the great God... Whose hand holds the depths of the earth, Who owns the tops of the mountains. The sea and dry land belong to God, who made them, formed them by hand.

Prayer: Great God of the mountains and the sea and creator of all that is, we give joyful thanks for the gifts of your creation. Give us the courage to assume individual and congregational commitments to renewing your creation through our study, prayer and actions.

Actions:

- Reuse items: repair them, donate them, sell them. Reusing is even better than recycling because the item does not need to be reprocessed before it can be used again <https://www.epa.gov/recycle/reducing-waste-what-you-can-do>.
- Educate yourself and your congregation: view The Story of Stuff. You can watch at <http://storyofstuff.com>.
- Contact your local utility for information on getting an energy audit for your house, or calculate your carbon footprint using the online resources available at www.coolcongregations.org.
- Turn down your water heater; 120 degrees is usually hot enough. Wrap your water heater in an insulating jacket if the water heater is over 5 years old or has no internal insulation.
- Stop rinsing dishes before loading the dishwasher, your dishwasher will work better, and you will save 6,000 gallons of hot water per year.
- Join Faith and Climate Action Newsletter List <https://faithandclimateactionmontana.weebly.com/>.

With UCC:

March 18th- Theology Pub 5:30-7:00 p.m. at Iron Griz, 515 S. Ave E. with your pastors.



Fourth Week in Lent (March 23rd - March 29th)

Impact of climate change on Water Resources in Montana

“Changing the climate is likely to increase the demand for water and make it more available. Warmer temperatures increase evaporation and water use by plants. Increases in rainfall, however, are likely to offset these losses. More water is likely to run off into the upper Missouri River and its tributaries. In areas that depend on melting snow, however, the supply of water is likely to decline. Mountain snowpacks release water when the snow melts during spring and summer. Upstream of dams, as the snowpack declines, less water is available during droughts for ecosystems, water-based recreation, and landowners who draw water directly from a natural lake or flowing river.” (*EPA 430-F-16-028, What Climate Change Means for Montana*)

Statement by the faith community: United Methodist Church

God’s creation is in crisis. We, the Bishops of The United Methodist Church, cannot remain silent while God’s people and God’s planet suffer. This beautiful natural world is a loving gift from God, the Creator of all things seen and unseen. God has entrusted its care to all of us, but we have turned our backs on God and on our responsibilities. Our neglect, selfishness, and pride have fostered: pandemic poverty and disease, environmental degradation, and the proliferation of weapons and violence. Despite these interconnected threats to life and hope, God’s creative work continues. Despite the ways we all contribute to these problems, God still invites each one of us to participate in the work of renewal. We must begin the work of renewing creation by being renewed in our own hearts and minds. We cannot help the world until we change our way of being in it. (From A Pastoral Letter from the Bishops of the United Methodist Church, *God’s Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action*, 2009. www.hopeandaction.org)

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 5:7-10 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light, for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth. Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

Prayer: God of all, we confess our complicity in failing to be good stewards of your creation. We ask your forgiveness as we seek to live in the light, walking gently on your earth, looking for ways to replenish what we have taken away, to heal what we have damaged.

Actions:

- Use less hot water. It takes a lot of energy to heat water. Use less by installing a low-flow shower head (thereby fasting from 350 pounds of carbon dioxide in one year) and washing your clothes in cold or warm water (fasting from 500 pounds per year).
- Encourage local restaurants to Just Say No to Styrofoam. To change from using petro-plastics to vegi-plastics; go to www.recyclaholics.com.
- Put up a clothesline or use a drying rack to dry your laundry.
- Use a power strip and turn off computers, televisions, etc. as you end your day.
- Immerse yourself in the Missoula Climate Ready plan (<https://www.climateadymissoula.org/>) and commit to making the actions successful.

With UCC:

- March 24th 6-8 p.m. Join the Climate Conversation -An Ark for the Anthropocene: Retelling Biblical Narratives for Contemporary Concerns Presented by **Nancy Menning** at Har Shalom 3035 South Russell Street | Dinner provided.



Fifth Week in Lent (March 30th - April 4th)

Impact of climate change on Forests in Montana

Longer growing seasons and increased carbon dioxide concentrations could increase the productivity of forests, but warmer conditions also make forests more susceptible to pests. Temperature controls the life cycle and winter mortality rates of pests such as bark beetles, which have infested millions of acres and killed millions of trees across the West in recent decades. With higher winter temperatures, some pests can persist year-round, and new pests and diseases may become established. Drought also reduces the ability of trees to mount a defense against attacks from beetles and other pests." (EPA 430-F-16-028, *What Climate Change Means for Montana*)

Statement by the faith community: Roman Catholic

"We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature. (#139)

[Concern for others and the natural environment attunes us to] the moral imperative of assessing the impact of our every action and personal decision on the world around us. If we can overcome individualism, we will truly be able to develop a different lifestyle and bring about significant changes in society. An awareness of the gravity of today's cultural and ecological crisis must be translated into new habits. (#208-209) (Quotes from *Laudato Si: Our Common Home*, Pope Francis, 2015)

Scripture Reading: Ezekiel 37:14 O my people! I will put my spirit in you that you may live, and I will settle you upon your land; thus you shall know that I am the Lord. I have promised and I will do it, says the Lord.

Prayer: God of all, let us trust in a resurrection of will to restore your creation. And grant us your vision of creation transformed. Lead us to let go of those behaviors that would keep us from imagining such a renewal. Give us the desire to work with others who understand that faith in you demands working for healing for your creation.

Actions:

- Drive less. You'll save one pound of carbon dioxide for every mile you don't drive! Walk or bike during Lent this year and watch as nature shows its magnificence around you! If you drive 20 miles less each week this Lent, you will have fasted from 120 pounds of carbon dioxide.
- Obey the speed limit when driving. Every 10 mph faster reduces fuel economy by about 4 mpg, a figure that remains fairly constant regardless of vehicle size.
- Get to know your neighbors at UCC, trade numbers, and consider carpooling.

At UCC:

- March 29th is Alternative Transportation to church day (walk, ride a bike, skateboard, carpool, or ski). Blessing of the Bicycles after worship in the Courtyard.
- April 1st 7:00 p.m. Church movie night. Title TBA.
- Look ahead to Holy Week and Easter events at church (on the first page of this document).



Sixth Week in Lent (April 5th - April 9th)

How Montana State Government is addressing climate change:

“On Monday, July 1, 2019, Montana Governor Steve Bullock issued an Executive Order establishing the Montana Climate Solutions Council, tasking up to 30 Montanans with providing made-in-Montana recommendations and solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, prepare the state for climate impacts, and address the needs of communities in transition through appropriate economic development and workforce strategies Governor Bullock tasked the Council with issuing a Montana Climate Solutions Plan by June 1, 2020. Other duties include:

- Make recommendations toward achieving an interim goal of net greenhouse gas neutrality for electric loads in the state by no later than 2035 and a goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions economy-wide at a date to be determined by the Council;
- Coordinate with the Montana University System to identify strategies to build upon the work of the Montana Climate Assessment (MCA); and
- Coordinate with all relevant state agencies to make climate an immediate and actionable priority for the state and incorporate strategies to adapt to climate in agency planning.

Along with the establishment of the Council, Governor Bullock also announced that Montana will join the U.S. Climate Alliance. The U.S. Climate Alliance is a group of states that are committed to implementing policies that advance the goals of the Paris Agreement, aiming to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 26-28 percent below 2005 levels by the year 2025. “ <https://deq.mt.gov/DEQAdmin/dir/Climate>

Statement by the faith community: Evangelical

“Over the last several years many of us have engaged in study, reflection, and prayer related to the issue of climate change (often called “global warming”). We commend the four simple but urgent claims offered in this document to all who will listen, beginning with our brothers and sisters in the Christian community, and urge all to take the appropriate actions that follow from them: 1) human-induced climate change is real; 2) the consequences of climate change will be significant and will hit the poor the hardest; 3) Christian moral convictions demand our response to the climate change problem; and 4) the need to act now is urgent. Governments, businesses, churches, and individuals all have a role to play in addressing climate change—starting now.” (From “Climate Change: An Evangelical Call to Action.” ECA is a group of over 300 evangelical senior leaders in the U.S. <http://www.christiansandclimate.org/statement/>)

Scripture Reading: Psalm 118:1-2; 24-25 Give thanks to the Lord, who is good, whose love endures forever. Let the house of Israel say: God’s love endures forever. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice in it and be glad. Lord, grant salvation! Lord, grant good fortune.

Prayer: God of all, help us to respond to your never-ending love by giving to us the strength to bear moral witness to the assault on your creation, the audacity to make climate change a major priority in the public square, and the courage to remain steadfast in this effort.

Actions:

- Take a walk in your community. Greet your neighbors with a smile. Listen to the birds, look at the trees, and feel the rain, snow, or sun on your face. Rejoice in all creation!
- Take time to write or call an elected official about climate change or another creation care issue. In Montana, you can find your state representative’s email address at <https://www.leg.mt.gov/legislator-lookup/>, or call the legislative information number at 406.444.3064.
- Rejoice in God’s gift to the world through Christ our Lord, who reconciles all things on heaven and earth. Commit to continue elements of your carbon fast into the Easter Season and throughout the year.



PENNIES FOR THE RAINFOREST

Here is a fun idea for helping to solve the problem of climate change. Give a glass jar to every person in your household who wants to participate. There are two ways to join in. Your family can choose.

- 1) Everyone places pennies in their jar. It's a friendly competition--every penny counts as a point. BUT--silver coins count as negative points--so place *them* in other people's jars! At the end of the collection period, count up your points and give the winner a high five. Or a doughnut. Whatever. The real winner is the rainforest.
- 2) If you have chosen to take on the Lent Carbon Fast at UCC, put some money in your jar each time you either succeed in taking action for the climate (eating a plant-based meal, carpooling to school or work, writing a public leader about climate change, etc.). If you forget about your fast (like accidentally eating a cheeseburger), put some money in your jar too.

Either way, bring your jars to church at the end of Lent, and we will donate the money to the non-profit group Rainforest Action Network or the Rainforest Foundation:

Rainforest Action Network preserves forests, protects the climate and upholds human rights by challenging corporate power and systemic injustice through frontline partnerships and strategic campaigns.

The Green Team is proposing this idea because we believe that we can better help the Earth if we stop beating ourselves up about the small stuff, focus on systems change and join an effective group. There was a fantastic *New York Times* opinion piece about this, dated January 10, 2020. It's called "How to Stop Freaking Out and Tackle Climate Change." So this penny jar idea is one way of supporting an effective group that works on systems change.

In the spirit of being kind to ourselves and the Earth, remember this:

Every time you put a penny in a jar, you have a chance at starting over and experiencing God's grace.

Cut out this Bible verse, or write it out on another piece of paper, color and decorate it, and tape it to your penny jar as a reminder:

Be kind, compassionate, and forgiving to each other, in the same way God forgave you in Christ. -Ephesians 4:32