

## **Out of the Desert: A Faith Call for Climate Justice**

*September 2026*

“Gone is the joy of our hearts; our dancing is turned into mourning.”

### **Lamentations 5:15**

As faith-based organizations heeding our religious calling to revere the sacred gift of the living world—a gift meant for all, not just for some—we write today with a heavy heart, especially in the midst of the growing crisis of global climate change.

Our sacred texts and the moral teachings of our religious traditions call on us to love the Divine, to love each other and to love and protect the Earth. Yet, we are recklessly consuming at a pace that threatens the vitality of the very planet on which every living thing depends. We have failed to attend to the intertwined relationships with the Divine, each other and the natural world. As Pope Francis said in his encyclical letter (quoting his predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI), “The external deserts of the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast.”

We know that climate impacts are being felt around the world and around our country. We also know that those living in poverty feel these impacts first and have the fewest resources to recover. In the U.S., these are disproportionately black and brown communities. Our communities and the communities we serve are feeling the strain of higher utility bills and increasing grocery and transportation costs. Extreme heat, wildfires, and floods only exacerbate community economic and health burdens.

At a time when climate scientists agree that we have already overshoot the 1.5 degree C target for taming climate chaos, the current U.S. Administration is pulling back from both national responsibilities and international commitments to address this grave and impending crisis. Instead of taking these threats and impacts seriously, the current Administration is systematically dismantling essential environmental protections and funding. By overturning the Endangerment Finding, the legal basis for regulating climate pollution; dismantling climate research; relentlessly pushing for environmental deregulation of polluting industries; opening our treasured public lands and oceans to fossil fuel extraction; and eliminating programs to address environmental injustice, the current Administration is subjecting current and future generations to preventable suffering.

At a time when our global situation calls for greater solidarity, cooperation, and unity, this Administration is fostering policies that deepen division and undermine global solidarity. The United States, once regarded as a reliable global citizen, is now seen as unable to keep promises and preferring isolation from the community of nations. Most troubling, the United States has abandoned the primary role of any government: to promote the common good.

We seek a world that recognizes the sacredness of the earth and prioritizes human health, demands responsible stewardship and strives toward the common good. Our values proclaim the need for solidarity, accountability, justice, compassion and hope.

Solidarity requires a climate response that brings business, faith communities, governments and civil society together for the good of all humanity. Accountability demands that each sector play its part to keep our world from unraveling. Justice calls us to repair past and present harms to ensure a sustainable future. Compassion commands that we recognize that too many are suffering from our environmental neglect and engage our hearts to lead us to intentionally invest in climate adaptation. Hope proclaims the moral courage required and insists we use all tools necessary to protect those who are most vulnerable.

Recognizing the severity of the moment of increased climate threats, the United States must work globally and collectively as a nation. It is imperative that government – federal, state and local – support policies and economic structures that are long term and benefit the common good, protect human health and steward the gift of water, air and land. A whole-of-government approach must reject political greed, corruption and incumbency, and instead prioritize constituent well-being over personal power, economic greed or corporate demands. To ground ourselves in justice, we, as a nation, must equitably mitigate past environmental harms and restore right relationships with communities historically and presently facing the greatest threats from climate change.

Across our traditions, faith communities are not waiting for others to act. We are already leading. Our sacred spaces are becoming models of what is possible. Many of our denominations publicly support a full and fair transition away from fossil fuels. Some congregations are converting to solar power and preparing to serve as resiliency hubs when climate disaster strikes. Others are helping communities with energy audits, net-zero planning and clean energy procurement. We are planting trees. We are growing “Good News Gardens” that feed our neighbors. We are building decarbonization hubs and testing indoor air quality to show the real health costs of burning gas at home. We are supporting EV charging infrastructure and standing behind legal efforts to fight unlawful environmental rollbacks. At every level, from local congregations to denominational assemblies, we have made this a priority through resolutions and real commitments. Caring for the Earth and working alongside partners to help our communities recover from climate disasters is not optional in our faith traditions. It is core to who we are.

This work does not stop at our doors. We are investing in young people through advisory boards and organizing efforts, because they are already leading this movement. We are building coalitions across faith traditions and organizations. We are doing together what none of us could do alone, from organizing pilgrimages of hope to utilizing sway at tables of power. We are

bringing the moral consequences of climate science into our seminaries, so the next generation of faith leaders has both the knowledge and the spiritual grounding for this moment.

Our faith teaches us that hope is possible even in crisis. We are responding, rebuilding and leading, but we require the U.S. government to match our resolve. In this unprecedented ecological crisis, the time for bold and courageous climate action and environmental justice is now. The UN Environment Programme's 2026 report warns us that the only way to ward off the worst harms of the climate crisis is for humanity to end its dependence on fossil fuels. As faith communities commit to meet this moment, we urge our governments to join us by creating pathways to decarbonization, rejecting technological solutions that come with their own harms, and implementing justice-focused adaptation policies.

We must recognize that time is not an infinite resource and our ability to act has been continuously undermined by industries, entities and individuals bankrolling campaigns and lobbying against clean energy policies. While individual actions are important, meeting this moment demands systems-level action, faithful democratic engagement and policy reform that address systemic inequity and injustice. Our legacy and morality will be measured by how we meet this moment to protect and honor the sacred Earth, all communities, and the Divine.

Adamah

American Friends Service Committee

Arizona Faith Network

Bethany Center Hudson Valley

Catholic Climate Covenant

Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life

Creation Justice Ministries

Dayenu: A Jewish Call to Climate Action

Deignan Institute for Earth and Spirit at Iona University

Dominican Leadership Conference

Edmund Rice International

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Franciscan Action Network

Franciscans International

Florida Council of Churches

Georgia Interfaith Power & Light

Green The Church

GreenFaith

Laudato Si Movement

Loretto Community (Sisters of Loretto)

Maine Council of Churches

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Mennonite Central Committee U.S.  
Metro NY Catholic Climate Movement  
National Baptist Convention USA, Inc.  
National Council of Churches, USA  
New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light  
OHALAH: Association of Rabbis, Cantors and Rabbinic Chaplains  
for Jewish Renewal  
Passionists International  
Passionist Solidarity Network  
Pax Christi Florida  
Pax Christi USA  
Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary JPIC/NGO Network  
Sisters of Charity Federation  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team  
Sisters of Charity of New York  
Sisters of St. Joseph, Brentwood  
Texas Impact  
Union for Reform Judaism  
United Church of Christ  
United Women in Faith