



EarthCare Connections



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Worldwide Ministries
EarthCare

Fostering awareness of our spiritual oneness with the earth and promoting active care of creation.

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2020: A Historic Moment in Time

The year 2020 has been unlike any in recent memory. The murder of George Floyd was the match that lit a flame of pent-up anger and resentment that had been building from centuries of systemic racism and social injustice in this country. At the same time, we are suffering through a devastating pandemic that has ruined many lives and wrecked the economy.

This groundswell represents an important moment in history. It is a shift in consciousness towards a more equitable and socially just world. As Barbara Marx Hubbard wrote in her book, *Conscious Evolution*, “Consciousness doesn’t evolve slowly in a steady state, but rather in ‘quantum jumps’ at times of crisis, when things look worst. Our current crises are not the precursors of an apocalypse but the natural birth pains of an awakened, universal humanity. This is our finest hour!”¹

But waking up is just the beginning. We must examine the ways the Black Lives Matter movement and environmentalism are linked. Society has decided that parts of our planet are disposable, including disproportionately to minority neighborhoods and the people who live there. It is a way of saying that the place—and the people and all the other life that calls that place home—are of no value. As Hop Hopkins wrote in the 6/8/20 edition of *Sierra Magazine*: *If climate change and environmental injustice are the result of a society that values some lives and not others, then none of us are safe from pollution until all of us are safe from pollution. Dirty air doesn’t stop at the county line, and carbon pollution doesn’t respect national borders. As long as we keep letting the polluters sacrifice Black and brown communities, we can’t protect our shared global climate.*²

The truth is self-evident; the longer racism is not addressed, the harder it will be to save the planet.

EarthCare’s Action Item 7, **Ecological Justice** is to promote an environmentally socially just world that is free from oppression and discrimination against people, and the inhumane treatment of animals. It concludes with the following from Charles Fillmore’s book, *Jesus Christ Heals*:

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We all intuitively know there is something wrong in a world where poverty, suffering, and sorrow prevail. We would not, any of us, create such a world. We all want to see these things blotted out in this world.

As Unity's fifth principle says, *Live the truth we know.*

We mustn't lose the opportunity to be a compassionate leader in this shift because the future of America, and indeed the world, is at stake. Now is the time to take meaningful action to promote a more racially and socially just world. Be a leader! As recently departed civil rights icon John Lewis once said, *If not us, who? And if not now, when?*

To learn more about these issues and what you can do, read:

- ¹[*Conscious Evolution: Awakening the Power of Our Social Potential.*](#)
New World Library, By Barbara Marx Hubbard, 1998. ISBN 1-57731-016-0.
- ²Sierra Magazine, [*Racism Is Killing the Planet*](#), by Hop Hopkins, June 8, 2020.
- *Touching Shame*, by Beth Remmes, EarthCare webpage. UnityWorldwideMinistries.org/earthcare
- [*I'm a black climate expert. Racism derails our efforts to save the planet.*](#) The Washington Post.
- [*The Optimist View: Why anti-racism and environmentalism go hand-in-hand.*](#)
 - Take the **Intersectional Environmentalist Pledge** to learn more about what steps you can take. Casa-alameda.org
 - Read [*Black Nature: Four Centuries of African American Nature Poetry*](#) by Camille T. Dungy.
 - Listen to *The Yikes Podcast* radiopublic.com

EarthCare Summit 2020

From Perfect Vision to Meaningful Action

The theme of EarthCare's first annual summit, *From Perfect Vision to Meaningful Action*, was the perfect backdrop to both the challenges as well as the opportunities that lie before us.

The opening prayer was led by Rev. Patricia Bass, Interim CEO of Unity Worldwide Ministries (UWM). Chairperson Emeritus Rev. Sharon Ketchum, senior Minister at Unity Spiritual Center of Lansing, Michigan, moderated the event by reviewing the vision, mission and purpose of the EarthCare program, followed by a review of the agenda.

Green Star Awardees

Four panelists representing each of the four 2020 Green Star Awardees gave presentations of their programs. Here are the congregations and their representatives:

First Unity Spiritual Campus @ St. Petersburg, Florida, Douglas Bonar; Unity of the Blue Ridge, Mills River, North Carolina, Lisa Bruggeman; Unity Church of Overland Park, Kansas, Christine Caseres; and Unity Church of Charleston, South Carolina, Elizabeth Caine and Sarah Scott Putman

Led by moderator Cylvia Hayes of Unity Community of Central Oregon, Bend, Oregon, the panelists were then asked a series of questions:

- What do you see as the benefits (or challenges) of having a Green Team? How has it impacted your congregation to date?
- America is experiencing a serious self-examination of previous norms as a result of the COVID-19 virus and calls for racial and social justice. We also are at the tipping point with regard to our ability to address climate change. Do you see any new opportunities for your environmental program because of this?
- If so, what do you see as the role of your EarthCare program at this important moment in history?

Questions from the audience followed.

A variety of innovative and practical ideas were expressed. The overarching message was that now is the time to take a stand to promote racial, social, and environmental justice, as well as affirmative actions to slow global warming. Doing this requires us, as Ms. Marx wrote, *to reframe our current predicament and see it as a painful yet necessary process of giving birth to the next stage of our evolution.*²

The complete list of accomplishments of this year's Green Star Awardees can be found on the [EarthCare webpage](#).

Newly Certified EarthCare Congregations

The following twelve (12) congregations were recognized for their commitment to EarthCare. Five completed all seven steps on the *Path to EarthCare*. By doing so, they have integrated into their spiritual message the commitment to achieving a world in which all humanity lives in a spiritual consciousness that manifests as loving coexistence with all creation and care for our Earth home:

EarthCare Certified Congregations, 6/2019-6/19/2020

Name	Region	Level of Achievement	Sr. Minister
Unity of Wimberly, Texas	South Central	A: Covenant	Rev. Jill Carey
Unity of Roseville, Roseville, CA	West Central	A: Covenant	Rev. Mary LaCalle
Unity of Anchorage, Alaska	Northwest	A: Covenant	Rev. Rachel Simpson
Unity Spiritual Center of Panama City, FL	Southeast	A: Covenant	Ron Holdaway, LUT
Unity in Marin, Novato, CA	West Central	A: Covenant	Rev. Tim Lidle
Unity of Las Cruces, New Mexico	Southwest	A: Covenant	Helen F. Wright, Minister Coordinator
Unity Spiritual Center of Vero Beach, CA	West Central	A: Covenant	Rev. Dan Holloway
Unity Center of Peace in Chapel Hill, NC	Southeast	C: EarthCare Congregation	Revs. Victoria Loveland-Coen and Rev. Rosemary Hyde,
Unity of the Valley Spiritual Center in Vacaville, CA	West Central	C: EarthCare Congregation	Rev. Dalia Adams
Unity Church of Charleston, SC	Southeast	C: EarthCare Congregation	Rev/ Ed Kosak
Unity Community of Central Oregon, Bend, OR	Northwest	C: EarthCare Congregation	Rev. Jane Hiatt
Unity in Lynnwood, WA	Northwest	C: EarthCare Congregation	Rev. Dr. Richard Loren Held

This is the most congregations to be certified in one year since the program was initiated in 2008. Congratulations!

The summit can be found on the UWM EarthCare Facebook page

www.facebook.com/UnityEarthCare

or [viewed on YouTube](#).

Many thanks to Rev. Kathy Harwood Long of Friends of Unity, Plymouth, Michigan and Beth Remmes of Unity Atlanta for their technical expertise in producing the summit.

Note: It is a little difficult to find the summit as there are a number of videos at the site. Look for the one entitled, “Unity Worldwide Ministries EarthCare,” posted July 6, 2020.

Ron Habin Honored

Past EarthCare Ministry Team Chair Ron Habin was honored for his many years of service to EarthCare with a Lifetime Achievement Award. It reads as follows: *For Compassionate Service to our Planet.*

Thanks to Martha Powers of Unity of Cape Cod for designing the plaque.

Recently, Ron and I had a long conversation about his life. And even though I've known Ron a long time, I learned some amazing things. Here is a summary:

Mike: Ron, tell me a bit about your early years and education.

Ron: I was born and grew up in New York to Alice and Leon Habin. Mom was a doctor, teacher, and scientist who broke the gender barrier at medical school, and went on to test drugs for the FDA to determine their safety prior to release. She was a fierce advocate for individual rights. Dad lived in China until age 16 and later became co-owner of a printing company.



I graduated Valedictorian of my high school class in 1968. I went on to receive an undergraduate degree in Political Science from American University, Washington, D.C., and from there a master's degree in social anthropology from Montclair State University of New Jersey in 1980.

I got my Ph.D. in applied anthropology from the University of South Florida in 1995, and was later honored by being named a "Fellow" in applied anthropology from the Society of Applied Anthropology.

Mike: What are some of your passions and professional accomplishments?



Ron: I have always been committed to political, social, racial, and economic justice causes. As a college student, I protested against the Vietnam War. After my undergraduate, I was hired as staff assistant to a liberal Republican congressman.

Later, I conducted a study regarding the intergenerational effect of racial environmental injustice upon minorities. I also was a founder of a museum and ongoing heritage center in an African American neighborhood. I helped create "The Last Harvest" project, as children of farmworkers took photographs of their parents performing in their last year of service.

Among the many things I learned from retired farmworkers was their extreme need for medical and dental care with local hospitals. So I headed a study that shined the light on would-be polluters, demonstrating that aggrieved alligators and fish were being born with deformed genitalia. I even testified before the Environmental Protection Agency, proving that a variety of pesticides being used in the farm lands of Florida were a direct cause of three generational mental and physical maladies.

Mike: Talk about your spirituality.

Ron: I studied Buddhism under Ram Dass. This led me to an interest in the topic of death and spirituality. So I produced a documentary on the topic for a New York radio station.

In 1995, I married Annette. It was Annette who introduced me to Unity a year before our nuptials. I had never heard of the movement and at first thought it was an evangelical church. If it had been, I would have negated the marriage proposal. I've regularly attended Unity Church in Orlando, Florida, for the past 26 years. In 2005, I was blessed by being an empathetic chaplain.

Mike: Why did you get involved in EarthCare and do you have any final words for us?

Ron: My involvement with the environmental movement came from a calling from God. For EarthCare to thrive in coming decades, it is essential that more young people become involved. And although Unity Worldwide Ministries is an open, inclusive religious community, we must do a better job of reaching out to minorities and LGBTQ communities and make them a part of the EarthCare movement.

As you know Mike, the early years of this program were rocky at times. But I believe with all my heart that healing our challenged Mother Earth is His holy path. EarthCare is in the divine flow and through continued hard work and perseverance; its mission to foster awareness of our spiritual oneness with the Earth and promote active care of all creation will be achieved.

Editor's Note: We had to cut short our interview because the chairperson of the local Democratic Party was at the door, who wanted to talk to Ron about his recent acceptance to become a Precinct Captain for the party. Obviously, Ron's quest to make a better world continues!

Mary Gerken, New Core Team Member

The EarthCare Team is pleased and excited to announce its newest member, Mary Gerken. Mary has attended Unity churches for 32 years and assisted two in obtaining certification through the EarthCare Program: First Unity Spiritual Campus in St. Petersburg, Florida and Unity of the Valley Spiritual Center in Vacaville, California.

Mother Earth has always been a connection to the Divine for Mary. As she says, "I can go outside and feel the Creator immediately. I try to honor and care for Her in every way I can. I have never eaten much meat and committed to a vegan diet for the last 7 months. I've installed solar panels on my home. I walk or bike as my major mode of transportation in St Petersburg. I have a garden, compost, and vermicompost. I prayer and mediate while focusing on our earth and our co-inhabitants."



Welcome aboard, Mary!

Mentoring Calls

Facilitated by David Cordova, Unity Church of San Antonio, on the second Saturday of each month, at 11 a.m. (CT). For more information, please contact David at davecordova@msn.com, or by calling 210-825-8422.



Telephone Dial in number for **AUDIO ONLY:**
(571) 392-7650
Pin: 779 087 6107

Unless you have a high bandwidth Internet connection it is better to call in using the above audio dial in. Of course, it is a joy to see each other's faces in real time. I usually record the calls which include video.

For Audio using a computer microphone and Video (optional)

Cut and paste this link into **Google Chrome** URL (top line):
<https://us.bbcollab.com/guest/d72429ecf4714e00988087381f84d51f>

We have an EarthCare resource webpage located at
www.UnityWorldwideMinistries.org/earthcare

The next mentoring call will be on August 15, 2020.

Facebook

Please check out our Facebook page for timely information and comments by fellow "Unitics" regarding our environment!

www.facebook.com/UnityEarthCare



The Facebook page is maintained by Unity EarthCare Team member Beth Remmes of Unity Atlanta, Peachtree Corners, Georgia.



Mike McCord, Editor
Unity Church of Overland Park, Kansas