The Purpose of the United Religions Initiative in North America is to promote enduring, daily interfaith cooperation, to end religiously motivated violence, and to create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the earth and all living beings by connecting and empowering the interfaith movement in the North America region.

URI and the Environment
By Rebecca Tobias

"Our purpose is to create wise environmental grassroots and global partnerships to aggregate, amplify and catalyze moral imperatives among all traditions to live in sacred relationship with the natural environment and the community of life."

This is the mission statement for our Environmental CC, and it captures the tone and the intention expressed in the rich and varied contributions from our members from multiple Cooperation Circles who have offered their reflections in this special Earth Day edition. Most call to question the quality of our spiritual and practical lives, mindful that our natural environment has reached limits and challenges never before encountered by the human family. Great changes lie ahead which hold moral and ethical questions too often unexplored as each of us asks, "What role do I play in caring for Creation?"

Read more...

Leadership Spotlight

URI North America is honored to feature the Rev. Sally Bingham, President and Founder of Cooperation Circles Interfaith Power and Light and the Regeneration Project, with over 15,000 congregations affiliated throughout the United States. Rev. Bingham is deeply respected in both the interfaith and environmental sectors and was recently featured in Rolling Stone Magazine. Earth Day is the perfect opportunity to engage your Cooperation Circle and to urge your congregation to join Interfaith Power and Light. Rev. Bingham, thank you for everything you do to foster peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings.

April 2013
Special Earth Day Edition

URI North America
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Earth Day Articles from the URI and Environmental Communities

"Ecological Civilization and a Commonwealth of Life" by Herman Green, Cynthia Sampson and Rebecca Tobias of the URI Environmental CC

"The Critical State of Mother Earth" by Phil Lane Jr, and Rex Weyler of Protecting and Restoring the Sacred CC

"Dallas Interfaith Power and Light" by Stephen Fuqua

"Black Woman Who Walked for Peace Now Walking for the Environment" by Edith Billups about Audri Scott Williams, URI Multiregion Coordinator

"End to Canada's Seal Hunt" by Kirin Bali, Chair, URI Global Council

"A Reminder to URI for the Need for Education, Planning, Policy & Management to Heal the Earth" by Rev. Dr. David Randle

The Pachamama Alliance and the Brahma Kumari's 'Awaken the Dreamer' Together by Diana Tillman

What you can do now!

Keystone XL Petition. Public Comment Period ends on
A Message from Rev. Sally Bingham

Last week in Washington DC leaders of state Interfaith Power and Light programs met for our annual three day conference where we shared creative ideas, best practices, and discussed mutual concerns.

On day three, 80 of us fanned out on Capitol Hill and visited legislators carrying moral and values based messages related to energy efficiency and regulation of air pollution. We expressed our wish for President Obama to reject the Keystone XL pipeline because we believe that transporting dirty tar sand oil from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico brings extraordinary risk to the heartland of America and provides no particular benefit to the American people. We simply cannot risk harming Creation and our nation’s natural resources because it is profitable for a few while very costly to many. Protection of the gifts from God that provide health and safety to all people is a priority of ours. After all, God put Adam in the garden to till and to keep it. We are expected to be gardeners not wrecking machines.

Learn about the impact of Keystone XL on your communities and add your voice to the US State Department public comment period through our Interfaith Power and Light petition website, opportunity for your participation ends April 22nd.

Greening the Faith: An Interview with Sally Bingham

Below is an excerpt from an article printed with permission from Sierra Club Green Home

“This interfaith ministry combines nearly all mainstream religions. “We’re the only group that does just climate work and that works with the interfaith community...Among those faiths uniting under the banner of religious environmentalism are the major denominations—“an absolutely wonderful, unintended” benefit, Bingham says. “We’ve brought all these Jews, Christians, Mormons together ... standing in solidarity with an issue they care greatly about. And that’s been wonderfully fulfilling.” Read more...

Swing with a Crosier; 'Rev. Sally Bingham’s Mission to Save Our Planet'

In this warm-hearted video interview, Bishop William E. Swing speaks with Rev. Sally Bingham about how her calling to
protect the environment changed the course of her life, and the lives of so many others across the country. Hear her inspirational story to find out how one person can make a major difference in our world.

Cooperation Circle Spotlight

We at OCICE feel that Global Warming is the biggest issue affecting the planet today and that it is exacerbating every other environmental issue. We stress the need to push our local, state, and federal governments to focus on solar, wind, and geothermal energy production, rather than coal, nuclear, and natural gas. In fact, we feel that all environmental groups should focus their energy on this issue until we have all the world's government leaders on-board with making real change! read more...

A Message from Sande Hart
Chair, URI North America

To suggest that serving the URI’s North American region as Chair is a privilege and honor would be an understatement.

In 2002, when I first developed the women’s interfaith organization S.A.R.A.H., it was the connectivity, resources and matrix of the URI that made our work richer, deeper and shine a lot brighter. When 12 women first convened in my family room in August of 2002, we knew we were about to embark on some important work. read more...

The U.N. and the Environment
By Monica Willard, URI UN Representative

This year, on April 22nd, I will be attending an Interactive Dialogue of the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly on ‘Harmony with Nature’ to commemorate Mother Earth Day. The purpose of the interactive dialogue is to advance discussions on different economic approaches, in the context of sustainable development, and to further a more ethical basis for the relationship between humanity and the Earth. Learn more.

The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues will be held in New York on May 20-31st. Many URI CC members will take part in presentations and dialogues. Twelve year old Ta’Kaiya Blaney of the Sliamonn First Nation of BC Canada, who
presented at Rio+20, will be speaking representing Indigenous Youth, alongside Elder Chief Oren Lyons on a panel entitled: Celebrating and Commemorating the Rights of Mother Earth for the Seventh Generation: sharing our vision of the past, present and future generations. The panelists will address the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Universal Declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth.

Twelve year old Ta'Kaiya Blaney of the Sliammon First Nation of BC Canada amplify and catalyze moral imperatives among all traditions to live in sacred relationship with the natural environment and the community of life.” URI Environmental CC