

Extreme Heat: Community Needs and Faithful Responses

Education, Conversations and Community Resources

Overview

As extreme heat events become increasingly frequent and dangerous, faith communities are called to respond with both compassion and action. This 30-90 minute resource explores the sources, impacts, and responses to extreme heat for faith communities. It can be used in Sunday School classes, community groups, or Green Team meetings. This can be used with or without the webinar regarding linked below. **Video Resource:** [View the recording here](#)

Featured Speakers from webinar

- **Rev. Katie Sexton** - Director of the Arizona Faith Network
- **Dr. Eugene Livar** - Arizona's first Chief Heat Officer
- **Arene Rushdan** - Community Resilience Program Manager at the Arizona Faith Network
- **Rev. Dr. Job Cobos** - Pastor at Larkspur Christian Church

Facilitator Guidelines

- Make space for everyone to be heard
- Pay attention to those who share too often or those who are silent
- Consider using Parker Palmer Circles of Trust practices for small group guidance
- Adjust timing based on whether you watch the full webinar (60 minutes) or portions

Suggested Schedule

1. Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

2. Check-in (10-15 minutes)

Every person should have an opportunity to speak briefly without interruption. Use full group sharing or the 1-3-All method (1- write a response in solitude, 3-share responses with two other people then briefly share summaries with the whole group).

Option 1: Share what is bringing you life these days

Option 2: Grief and Gratitude Practice

- Set up a central altar space with notecards and pencils at each chair
- Ask participants to write their gratitude and grief
- Share aloud in trios or with the whole group (depending on group size)
- For small groups: Consider a ritual with candles where each trio lights a candle and brings it to the center altar

3. Bible Exploration (15-20 minutes)

Scripture: Matthew 22:34-40 (Read together or invite different readers for each verse)

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, an expert in the law, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Reflection: Before exploring the response from Jesus in verse 37 ponder the question. “Which commandment in the law is the greatest?” Even though the religious elite were coming together to challenge Jesus in the previous texts, he did not shy away from helping those gathered to prioritize certain behaviors and practices. Among the vast ways to follow commandments, Jesus combined historic wisdom from the Hebrew texts of Deuteronomy and Leviticus to help people prioritize what is great and first among so many options. How can you and your congregation prioritize from among the many good options regarding following Jesus?

Look at verse 37 and 39 for hints. Today with so many options for how we receive and share information, spend money, choose and gather with friends and how we act we can hear echoes from Jesus saying “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” and ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’

4. Watch Extreme Heat Webinar (*Optional - 60 minutes*)

<https://youtu.be/RbkiF0wFJfw>

5. Reflection Questions (*20-30 minutes*) Consider using the 1-3-All method again

Personal and Congregational Discernment

- How can you and your congregation prioritize among the many good options for following Jesus?
- In our information-rich world with countless choices for spending time, money, and energy, how do we hear Jesus's call to "love God with all your heart, soul, and mind" and "love your neighbor as yourself"? How do you prioritize what to do in your life (daily, weekly, yearly)?
- How does your congregation discern the best next step or ministry idea?
- With so many good ways to follow Jesus, how do you select priorities?

Faith and Community

- What does loving God look like in your community?
- What does loving your neighbor look like in your community?
- How do you receive love from yourself?

Extreme Heat Responses

- What should faith communities know about the health risks of heat—especially for vulnerable populations?
- How could extreme heat impact your community?
- How can faith communities best partner with local governments, nonprofits, or health agencies in responding to extreme heat?
- What data or tools are available that congregations can use to guide ministries?
- Where do you see gaps that faith communities are uniquely positioned to fill?
-

6. Benediction: Invite each person to share one word that represents what they are carrying forth with them from the gathering.

7. Closing Prayer



Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)

Additional Resources

Arizona Faith Network Ministries Highlights

- [Glendale Respite Centers](#)
- [Cooling Centers Employment Opportunities](#)
- [AFN 2023 Program Spotlight - Heat Relief](#)
- [Arizona Faith Network Heat Relief Guidebook](#)
- [AZ Faith Network Heat Relief Overview](#)

Comprehensive Resource Library Find these on the [One Home One Future Website](#)

Extreme Heat Resources

- (Multi-Faith) [Global Heat Action Day Webinar](#) by ecoAmerica
- (Multi-Faith) [Heat Relief Overview](#) by Arizona Faith Network
- (Ecumenical) [Heat and Health](#) by Creation Justice Ministries
- (Ecumenical) [Extreme Heat Webinar](#) by Creation Justice Ministries
- (Methodist) [Extreme Heat Resources](#) by NC Conference of The United Methodist Church
 - (Methodist) [High Heat Response](#) by NC Conference of The UMC
- (Presbyterian) [Ways Churches can Respond to Extreme Heat and Climate Change](#) by Presbyterian Church USA
- (Multi-Faith) [Simple Ways Your Church Can Be a Heat Wave Haven](#) by Rebekah Simon-Peter
- (Secular) [Beat the Heat: Cooling Strategies to Stay Safe](#) by the Nicholas Institute at Duke
- (Secular) [Climate and Extreme Heat](#) by ClimateRx
- (Secular) [American Climate Perspectives, Volume III - Extreme Heat](#) by ecoAmerica

More Preparedness Resources

- [Mental Health and Climate Change Resources](#)
- (Christian) [After the Storm: Cultivating Hope/Healing after a disaster](#) by Green Chalice
- (United Church of Christ) [A Disaster Preparedness Manual for Churches](#) by Disaster Ministries, United Church of Christ
- (Christian, Ecumenical) [The Fierce Urgency of Now](#) by Creation Justice Ministries
- (Presbyterian) [Disaster Preparedness and Training Materials](#) by PCUSA
- (Multi-Faith) [Willing to Respond](#)
- (Disciples of Christ) [A Congregational Guide for Disaster Preparedness and Response by Week of Compassion](#)
- (Disciples of Christ) [Guía Congregacional para la Preparación y Respuesta Ante Desastres by Week of Compassion](#)
- (Episcopalian) [Disaster Preparedness for Churches](#) by The Episcopal Church
- (Christian, Ecumenical) [Faithful Resilience](#) by Creation Justice Ministries
- (Unitarian Universalist) [Climate Resilience Through Disaster Response and Community Care](#) by UUA Side with Love
- (Ecumenical) [Weathering the Storm](#) by Creation Justice Ministries
- (Ecumenical) [After the Storm: Cultivating Hope/Healing After a Disaster](#) by Green Chalice

Videos

- (Multi-Faith) [Sacred Home: Creating Shelter, Building Resilience, and Living Carbon Neutral](#) by Blessed Tomorrow
- (Multi-Faith) [Finding Hope Despite Record Heatwaves and Smoke-Filled Skies: a report from Los Angeles](#) by Path to Positive
- (Multi-Faith) [Ready for the Storm: Faith Communities are Key to Climate Resilience](#) by Blessed Tomorrow
- (Multi-Faith) [Raising Resilient Children Amidst Climate Change](#) by Blessed Tomorrow
- (Multi-Faith) [Nature vs. Climate & COVID-19: Security, Love, Restoration](#) by Blessed Tomorrow
- (Multi-Faith) [Climate Resiliency as an Act of Love](#) by Blessed Tomorrow and Mennonite Church USA
- (Ecumenical) [Disaster Preparedness, Climate, and Faith Communities](#) by Green Chalice
- (Multi-Faith) [Pulling It All Together: Walk the Walk](#) by Blessed Tomorrow
- (Multi-Faith) [Congregational + Community Resilience](#) by Blessed Tomorrow
- (Lutheran) [Disaster Resilience and Response Playlist](#) by Lutherans Restoring Creation