



Interfaith Earth Network

Bridging Faith and Ecology

A program of the
Interfaith Conference
of Greater Milwaukee

We Hit Madison to "Do the Math"

"It's not a civil rights movement; it's a civil existence movement." – Rev. Lennox Yearwood

Some of our congregations will soon be taking significant action on climate change, and IEN will be offering you encouragement and the opportunity to do the same.

Fifteen members of IEN leadership and our congregations traveled by biodiesel bus to attend the "Do the Math" Tour of 350.org's founder, Bill McKibben, and friends. We heard Bill, Naomi Klein, Van Jones, Bishop Desmond Tutu, and Rev. Lennox Yearwood talk not only about the science, but also the moral implications, of the current treatment of Earth.

The scientific details came mostly from, "Global Warming's Terrifying New Math," www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/global-warmings-terrifying-new-math-20120719, McKibben's summer 2012 article in Rolling Stone magazine. In summary, proven coal, oil, and gas reserves of the fossil-fuel companies, and of the countries, such as Venezuela and Kuwait, that act like fossil-fuel companies, equal about 2,795 gigatons of CO₂, or five times the amount we can release to maintain 2 degrees of warming. Two degrees is the maximum Earth can warm if we are to maintain a livable planet.

Given this situation, they are asking for actions modeled on the divestment campaign of the '70s and '80s from South African companies which eventually led to the dismantling of apartheid. Right now, they are focusing on universities, asking them to stop any new investment in fossil fuel companies, and to ensure none of their directly held or commingled assets include holdings in fossil fuel public equities and corporate bonds within 5 years. As one speaker said, "If it's wrong to wreck the climate, then it's wrong to profit from it."

They also welcome the participation of congregations, which is where we come in. We will have sample language for a resolution to submit at the appropriate level of governance in your faith; we hope it will have been successful in at least one faith community. Please contact us if you want this sample language.

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