

Interfaith Earthkeepers Meeting

April 22, 2026

Location: Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene

Moderator: Dennis Reynolds **Notetaker:** Tom Boyd

In attendance: Cynthia Black (via Zoom), Mona Brunson, Carl Bybee, Britni Cacan, Sue Craig, KC Hancock, Mark Lindberg, Theresa O'Brien (via Zoom), Barb Reuter, Gabe Scott, Virgil Tworek-Hofstetter, Kenny Watkins.

Invocation/Check-in:

Dennis opened the meeting by reading Langston Hughes in celebration of the earth. Check-in included introductions by name and some miscellaneous announcements. KC will lead a forest bathing experience at Armitage Park on May 2 starting at noon. New attendee Virgil Tworek-Hofstetter from Laudato Si announced that on October 3 there will be a celebration of the 800th anniversary of the death of Saint Francis. In the Catholic Church this event signifies the closing of the season of creation. Cynthia reported Eugene Friends recently held a plant giveaway. Douglas Tallamy's book, *Nature's Best Hope* was recommended. Later in the meeting Kenny mentioned that Robert McFarlane, author of *Is a River Alive?*, will be featured speaker at the McKenzie River Trust's annual Upstream gathering at the Shedd (June 2 at 7:30 pm; \$15). Details at mackenzeriver.org.

Hands-on Restoration Projects:

Turtle Flats habitat restoration. Tom Boyd shared an essay on Turtle Flats experience he had offered as a "ministry moment" during First Congregational's Creation Justice service. The reserve epitomizes both the damage that human activities can inflict and nature's quiet resilience. Through habitat restoration we can be part of a mutual healing process. The next habitat restoration event at Turtle Flats is scheduled for May 9 from 9:00-noon. Sign up is encouraged, and attendees should plan to arrive between 8:45 and 9:15 am.

Mark shared that Friends of Buford Park and Mount Pisgah will hold a plant sale, open house and a tabling event with live music and food on Saturday, May 2, from 9:00 am to 2:00pm. The address is 34639 Frank Parish Rd. Attendees can pre-order plants at the Friends of Buford Park & Mt. Pisgah website.

Sue Craig announced that the Unitarian Universalist Church will hold a plant giveaway on 5/26 starting at 11:30 am.

Britni reported on the Habitat Haven program of the Coast to Cascades Bird alliance (formally Audubon Society). This program certifies yards as nature habitat, providing volunteer guidance. There is a sliding scale fee for the service. Britni said that the school where she volunteers is attempting to be the first Lane County school with such certification.

Strengthen Our Connections and Ongoing Partnerships

A Stronger Together interfaith potluck was on April 19 at Emmaus Lutheran Church on the theme of Rest as Resistance. Barb attended and described the event as another well-attended and meaningful event. A panel provided Christian, Buddhist and Jewish perspectives on the theme.

The Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon Interfaith Earth Summit is on May 17 from 1:00-3:00, with the Unitarian Universal Church as a local site. Dennis noted that information from our group will be available at that event.

It was announced that ACES will be meeting this evening in advance of the May 1 general strike at the free speech Plaza commencing at noon.

State and Local Legislative Initiative Participation

Protect Lane County Watersheds Measure 20-373. Barb spoke of the urgent need for canvassers and financial support for this initiative. She shared that yard signs in support of the initiative are available from Yes on Measure 20-373 <protectlanecountywatersheds.org>.

The Eugene Clean Energy Fund held a campaign kickoff party on 4/16. The effort seeks signature gathers. Kenny noted that several local environmental groups are working on this initiative. Further information is available at the Fossil Free Eugene website, and at <eugeneleanenergyfund.org>.

Britni broached the idea of a subset of attendees getting together periodically to work together on initiatives of relevance. Kenny noted that the Interfaith Immigrant Alliance holds “pop-up” events similar to that proposed by Britni, often with educational information and comment-writing guidelines. Britni, Cynthia, and KC expressed interest in looking at various ways to approach such an activity, to be addressed at the next meeting.

Social/Climate Justice Project Support

Barb share her continued interest in forming a subgroup to develop climate resiliency hubs. As a result of the J. H. Baxter legal settlement grant money (maximum of \$10,000) for such projects is available through the United Methodist Church’s Earthkeepers program. KC, Gabe, Kenny, Dennis, and Carl expressed interest in this work group, with Mark mentioning that First Congregational Church might have potential as a resilience hub. Barb plans to schedule a subgroup meeting before our May 27 meeting. She shared handouts on the West Eugene Clean Energy Project and noted that Kristen Lee is the Lane County contact for the county’s Climate Action Plan.

Outreach - Initial Contact

Sue mentioned that she had approached a Mormon friend of hers, who has said she will follow up with the church’s bishop about potential involvement with our group. Dennis shared that when he resided in Port Townsend, Washington the community had started an annual interfaith event around Earth Day. A range of faith communities participated and shared their earth-honoring traditions. He noted that this was somewhat similar to Mark's idea of at some point holding some sort of earth celebration event at Turtle Flats.

Technology

KC reported she is working on website/communications and is hoping to get together with Cynthia soon. Cynthia said she makes a list of events for organizations which Interfaith Earthkeepers supports, and puts this information on the calendar. Carl noted he is working with Ron on the transition of website management. Dennis mentioned that the Eugene Lookout news outlet might be a good resource for getting our information before the public.

KC offered the viewpoint that, as organizations grow, they need to evolve and develop tools to manage the complexities of a larger organization. On a related note, she said it would be helpful to have a small fund available for periodic technology purchases. There was discussion of whether such a fund already exists. Further information will be sought from a former Earthkeeper who managed that account. There was a consensus among those attending that it would be helpful to have a small account. Tom mentioned the possibility of holding some sort of fundraising event such as a film showing to help in generating funds.

Education: We discussed chapters 5 and 6 of Bill McKibben's *Here Comes the Sun*. Chapters 7 and 8 are assigned for the next meeting.

Next Meeting: the upcoming meeting will be held at first Congregational Church in Eugene on May 27. Mark announced that Kristen Lee will be speaking on Lane County's climate action efforts. We discussed frequency of guest speakers, with those opinions shared in support of outside speakers on roughly an every-other-month basis. In notetaker Tom Boyd's anticipated absence Britni Cacan has agreed to take notes.