

CLIMATE CHANGE: A MATTER OF FAITH

Throughout American history, people of faith have been at the forefront in addressing injustice. They have transformed hearts, minds, and the course of our country. Today, religious communities are called to a new moral challenge — climate change. For the sake of our neighbors and for all of God’s creation, faith communities can provide a prophetic voice and powerful examples to inspire others to join them in leaving the legacy of a healthier, safer world for future generations. These talking points provide a starting point. Tailor them to accommodate the values and beliefs of your faith tradition or that of your audience.

1. ***Creation is a reflection of the glory of God.*** We are grateful for the gifts we’ve been given, and must fulfill our God-given responsibility to be good stewards of God’s creation, which includes all of us who live within it.
2. ***We have always stood for justice and helping our neighbors.*** Whether it be civil rights, poverty, children or creation, our basic sense of right and wrong guides us to protect people and our shared home.
3. ***Climate change is a spiritual challenge.*** Some may see climate change as a political, economic, or scientific issue, but we recognize it, first and foremost, as an ethical issue. Leading on climate is part of how we live our faith.
4. ***We have a responsibility to care for the least of us.*** The poorest amongst us bear the greatest burden and risk of climate change. We witness this firsthand as we restore communities in the wake of unprecedented storms, droughts, and disasters.
5. ***We are called to respond to what we see around us.*** We are moral messengers for the common good, and must translate our compassion into action.
6. ***When we lead on climate, we strengthen our congregation and our communities.*** Climate solutions create fellowship, inspire our youth, enrich our faith, and reduce our costs, freeing up money for mission.
7. ***We can make a difference in our hopes, our place of worship, and for people all over the world.*** The actions we take serve as witness to our commitment and our power to instill hope and provides a powerful example of how to drive positive change.
8. ***We can pass down a safer, healthier, more vibrant world to our children.*** One of our most important missions is to protect the home of future generations.

COUNTERPOINTS

Following are the current main arguments against shifting to clean energy or addressing climate change, along with suggested responses.

1. Poor people and underdeveloped regions of the world will be impacted the most severely by higher costs of renewable energy.

Response: None of us wants the the pollution from coal and oil in our air and water. Poor people across the world suffer the most from pollution. They deserve clean air and water for their communities. Clean energy now actually costs less, and can be developed more quickly than dirty, polluting fossil fuels.

2. God gave people dominion over nature. We should use what he provided for us. Whatever happens is God's will.

Response: God has gifted us a bountiful world to live our best lives. He calls on us to care for our neighbors and God's creation, and this includes asking us to walk gently on God's earth. The failure to act as proper stewards demonstrates a schism between humankind and the divine. By fulfilling our duty to care for creation, we adhere to the moral call of our faith.

3. The record shows that global temperature has risen and fallen cyclically throughout history, with some periods warmer and others cooler than the present.

Response: What's happening now is different than what's happened in the past. Temperature changes happened over millennia, not decades like we are seeing now. Pollution today is caused by people.

4. The global warming controversy shifts the emphasis away from the great moral issues of our time, notably the sanctity of human life, the integrity of marriage and the teaching of sexual abstinence and morality to our children.

Response: This is a false choice. We can have clean air and water, and address more personal moral challenges at the same time, just as we can address poverty and injustice at the same time. In many ways, addressing climate change is addressing the biggest moral challenge of our time.