

EcoFaith Recovery – Vision 2017

The Challenge and Our Response

“If only there were something I could do about it.”

Countless times a day and all across our country, such sentiments arise from people who feel angry about injustice, overwhelmed by global economic forces beyond their control, and depressed by a seeming lack of opportunity to do anything about it.

Those of us who are part of EcoFaith Recovery have known these feelings well. Beginning in 2009, such concerns brought us together near the confluence of the Columbia and Willamette Rivers in Oregon where we drank deeply from the streams of progressive Christian faith, ecological justice, relational organizing, and 12-step recovery. The more we came out of isolation into spiritually grounded, relational community, the more God awakened our capacity to make a difference. In the process, we tapped into sources of faith and hope that inspired us to take action for the revitalization of congregational ministry and other forms of community life. Over time, we identified the characteristics of our gatherings that were rekindling our hope, inspiring our imagination and raising up our courage to take life-affirming action together. We named them the *Practices for Awakening Leadership*, and they include

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| 1) spiritual practices, | 2) relational conversations, | 3) telling our stories, |
| 4) rhythms of engagement, | 5) mentoring, and | 6) conscious leadership development. |

Through engagement with these Practices, we began to

- *recover* our true vocation as people of faith and citizens of earth;
- *restore* our sanity in the midst of an addictive culture and economy;
- *reconcile* a right-relationship with all of creation, both human and nonhuman communities;
- *rediscover* courage to rise up with the most vulnerable and oppressed among us in the face of human systems that escalate injustice and climate change;
- *reclaim* our prophetic imagination for the flourishing of an earth-honoring and life-honoring faith, economy, and culture.

Since then, we have continued to come together and support one another as emerging leaders from varied congregations of different denominations. We have carried these *Practices* back to our communities as a gift which deepens faith and awakens our collective leadership potential. Through these *Practices*, God strengthens our communities, reforms our faith, and equips us to put that faith into public action. In this way, EcoFaith Recovery emerged as a faith-based leadership development effort with a mission of

- + identifying existing and emerging leaders,
- + developing our leadership potential through EcoFaith's *Practices for Awakening Leadership*, and
- + lifting one another up to support our faith communities in taking courageous public action for the recovery of human life and the healing of God's creation.

How are EcoFaith Leaders lifting one another up to take public action since 2009?

- **Training 125 leaders to engage 18 congregations** in caring for God's creation through day-long *Care for Creation* trainings in partnership with Lutherans Restoring Creation;
- **Equipping 124 leaders** to engage their congregations in creative public action through an eight session (20 – 40 hour) *Organizing in the Biocommons* course;
- **Inspiring and coordinated the efforts of 120 leaders who turned out more than 350 people of faith** to take public action through the **Portland People's Climate March and ecumenical worship event**;

- **Engaging 187 people in one or more *Beyond Fossil Fuels* gatherings** focused upon mobilizing people of faith and others to take public action with the goal of making Oregon a fossil fuel free state;
- **Training 52 leaders in *Simply in Season* small group** food and fellowship group so that those leaders could engage over **150 people** in *Simply in Season* small groups;
- **Providing 25 mentored youth and young adult internships** to date, inspiring new generations to engage in faith-rooted, relationally-connected public action for the recovery of human life and healing of creation.

In 2017, EcoFaith Recovery will awaken collective leadership potential using the *Practices for Awakening Leadership* by

- 1) **Supporting the grassroots leadership** efforts of over 200 existing EcoFaith leaders as they organize their congregations to take public action in bold and creative new ways as a means of seeding broader cultural transformation;
- 2) **Engaging at least 120 people from 20 congregations in public “Eco-Reformation” Projects** in celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation;
- 3) **Training at least 40 leaders from at least 10 congregations to engage in public action by:**
 - Offering at least 24 leaders from 8 congregations a weekend immersion into the *Practices for Awakening Leadership* and providing EcoFaith mentoring as they take *the Practices* back home to engage their communities in a public Eco-Reformation project;
 - Engaging at least 20 leaders from 10 congregations in a campaign that will advance climate justice, racial justice, and justice for low-income communities. These leaders will equip one another to bring the *Practices for Awakening Leadership* to larger justice movements while using the *Practices* to engage their own communities in the campaign;
- 4) **Engaging 5 more young adult interns in leadership growth and development** through a stipended and mentored EcoFaith internship through which they engage a group or community in the *Practices for Awakening Leadership* and evaluate its impact on their community;
- 5) **Offering two weekend-long “EcoFaith Institutes”** that will provide an immersion into the *Practices for Awakening Leadership* for any of the leaders referenced above;
- 6) **Engaging new and existing leaders more deeply in the *Practices for Awakening Leadership*** to awaken their leadership and organize their communities to engage in creative public action.
 - Launch a new website to more effectively engage people in the *Practices*
 - Engage leaders in sharing video, audio and written stories of how they are using the *Practices* in their contexts and examples of how others can use them in theirs

We Invite you to Join Us By...

- ☐ **Participating regularly in an EcoFaith Initiative to develop your leadership capacities;**
- ☐ **Starting an EcoFaith group focused upon the *Practices* within your community of faith** and have your group listed on the EcoFaith website;
- ☐ **Share stories of ways you are using the *Practices* in your context via the EcoFaith website**
- ☐ **Volunteering two or more hours per week** to help EcoFaith advance any of the goals above or offer your administrative or technical skill to support this work;
- ☐ **Becoming a monthly sustaining donor or make a one-time gift** to enable EcoFaith Recovery to raise the funds needed from individual donors and congregations. This is in addition to the \$25,000 provided to EcoFaith Recovery by the InFaith Community Foundation each year.
- ☐ **Inviting your faith community to designate benevolence funds to or hold a special offering for EcoFaith Recovery** to support the expansion of our leadership development efforts and internships and the benefit they provide to our communities.