

EARTH letter

Summer
2013

Finding Your 24/6 Rhythm in a 24/7 World

By Matthew Sleeth



A decade ago, I was chief of staff of a hospital and director of emergency services. Taking care of sick people is good work, and I loved my job. Like many physicians, I was often called a workaholic. The label didn't surprise me. For many years, I worked 24-hour shifts in the emergency room. Throughout the early years of my career, work identified both what I did and who I was.

This all-consuming passion for my work persisted until my early forties, when I read the Bible for the first time. That's when I discovered God's answer to our always-on, 24/7 culture of work, work, work.

The answer first appears in the opening pages of Genesis. God's rhythm since the beginning of time has been 24/6 — six days on, and one day off. When I began adopting that rhythm, my entire life changed for the better — physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

THE WEEKLY PAUSE

What does the word "Sabbath" mean? It simply means "stop." That's all. The Hebrew people didn't have names for the days of the week. There was one-day, two-day, three-day, four-day, five-day, six-day, Stop Day.

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ABOUT US

Earth Ministry engages the religious community in environmental stewardship. We work in partnership with individuals and congregations to respond to this great moral challenge through education, modeling sustainable lifestyle choices, and organizing for social change through environmental advocacy.

Founded in 1992, Earth Ministry has a history of leading the way in caring for the environment from a faith perspective. Our Greening Congregations Program was the first in the country to help houses of worship implement sustainable practices, and our faithful advocacy program is on the cutting edge of empowering clergy and lay leaders to speak out on public policy issues.

Earth Ministry supports a growing network of congregations and has a national membership. While Earth Ministry is rooted in the Christian tradition, we actively engage all religious communities on climate and energy issues through Washington Interfaith Power & Light. Our programs and resources are available to all. www.earthministry.org www.waipl.org

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

You may be familiar with the story of sisters Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42), in which Martha is consumed with the household tasks associated with Jesus' visit while Mary sits at Jesus' feet simply soaking in his teachings.

Every time I read this passage, I want to march right up to Mary and tell her to get to work. I've always identified with Martha, the one that sees what needs to be done and does it, and who gets frustrated when others don't see the same need and pitch in. If the Lord were to show up at my house, I know I'd be running around trying to make everything just perfect, and probably miss out on everything important he had to say.

Like so many others, stepping off the busy-ness bandwagon is my growing edge. In this issue of *Earth Letter*, we explore the concept of Sabbath — taking time out of our hectic days to rest, reflect, and be open to a presence greater than ourselves.

The concept of Sabbath is one that is honored across the Abrahamic traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Slowing down one day a week benefits not only our own mental, physical, and emotional health but the health of the planet as well.

Join us in taking some time to be still and to reconnect with the holiness that first called you to care for God's good earth, and let it be the strength that moves you forward.

Blessings,



GOINGS-ON at Earth Ministry

Earth Ministry/WAIPL relies on donations from individuals like you to make this important work possible. Join or renew your membership, sign up for monthly giving, or make a special gift at www.earthministry.org or by calling (206) 632-2426.

Three New Greening Congregations

Earth Ministry recently welcomed three new Greening Congregations to the growing list of churches with a strong commitment to environmental stewardship and that have successfully completed our certification process.

Creation care efforts of **Davis United Methodist Church** (Davis, CA) include installation of solar panels; creation of Grace Garden, an organic community garden providing food for the homeless and poor; conducting educational forums and Low Carbon Diet groups; and installation of CFL lights, weather stripping, and programmable thermostats.

St. Luke Lutheran (Portland, OR) put together an Environmental Sustainability Assessment Action Plan complete with detailed recommendations to implement throughout the year. A highlight is "St. Luke Recycles," a bi-monthly church-wide recycling program for items that are not picked up curbside. This successful project has grown into a community-wide event that served 400 households in its initial run.

Maple Leaf Lutheran (Seattle, WA) has been very involved in environmental justice as part of their greening efforts. A recent initiative is educating members about proposals to ship dirty coal from Washington ports to be burned in Asia. The congregation showed the movie "Dirty Coal" and invited Earth Ministry's Jessie Dye to teach two adult education classes on coal export in the last year.

Congratulations to all three new Greening Congregations!



Earth Ministry's Jessie Dye presents a Greening Congregation banner to members of St. Luke Lutheran's Environmental Stewardship Committee



Earth Ministry/WAIPL Executive Director LeeAnne Beres and Gov. Jay Inslee at the Climate Action bill signing

Climate Action Bill Signed in Washington

Gov. Jay Inslee signed Washington State's landmark climate action bill into law on Tuesday, April 2. It calls for evaluating the climate pollution reduction programs of other states and Canadian provinces, and it requires for the Governor and legislative leaders to develop policies to ensure that we achieve our climate pollution limits for 2020 and beyond.

It was Gov. Inslee's first bill signed since taking office and he preceded the ceremony with a short speech, which can be watched here: <http://bit.ly/YhRPz2>. Big thanks to all the Earth Ministry members who spoke up in support of climate action!

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Churches, Clergy, & Congregations

Earth Ministry launched into the busy spring season with events at REACH (Renton Ecumenical Association of Churches), University Temple United Methodist Church, Wooden Cross Lutheran, Davis United Methodist Church, St. Luke Lutheran, Maple Leaf Lutheran, and St. Mary's Parish.

Earth Ministry staff also made presentations to Assemblies of God students at Northwest University, Methodist retirees at Wesley Gardens Retirement Community, and to members of the Maryknoll Associates, a Catholic missionary order.

United Church of Christ Opposes Coal Export

On April 27, the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ (UCC) approved a resolution opposing coal export terminals and calling for a comprehensive, region-wide Environmental Impact Statement for all proposed terminals in Oregon and Washington.

Drafted by Earth Ministry's LeeAnne Beres and Prospect UCC's Pastor Meighan Pritchard, the resolution was passed nearly unanimously by the 275 attendees at the UCC annual meeting in Wenatchee, WA. Staff of Earth Ministry/WAIPL taught a coal export workshop at the gathering and also served as issue experts in a hearing about the resolution prior to the vote.

Text of the resolution can be found on the Earth Ministry website at <http://bit.ly/128LkPG>.

Faith Voices in the State Legislature

People of faith made their voices heard during the 2013 Washington State legislative session!

Earth Ministry and the other members of the Environmental Priorities Coalition hosted two Legislative Workshops this year — one each in Bellevue and Spokane, WA. Over 250 participants heard from legislators, environmental and faith leaders, and experts from the three environmental priority campaigns: Toxic-Free Kids and Families, Conservation Works, and Clean Energy Solutions.

Equipped with solid information and motivated by religious values of stewardship, justice, and care for creation, our activists turned out in force in support of these bills. Nearly 1,500 people met with their elected representatives on Environmental Lobby Day on February 19, Interfaith Advocacy Day on February 20, and Catholic Lobby Day on March 22.

As always, Earth Ministry staff taught standing-room only workshops on "how to lobby" for newcomers. We also led break-out sessions on the Toxic-Free Kids and Families Act.

Washington Interfaith Power & Light

Earth Ministry/WAIPL staff traveled to Washington, DC, the second week in April for the national Interfaith Power & Light (IPL) conference and lobby day. Religious leaders from 39 states around the country participated; LeeAnne Beres and Jessie Dye represented Washington State.

The first several days were jam-packed with opportunities to share our successes, hear from religious leaders and policy experts, and be inspired by the good work of IPLs across the country. On lobby day, all the state leaders went to Capitol Hill to meet with their senators and representatives, carrying the message of creation care.

LeeAnne and Jessie met with members of the Washington State congressional delegation in support of EPA industrial carbon regulations and the need for a programmatic Environmental Impact Statement regarding proposed coal export terminals in the Northwest.



Religious leaders from 39 states at the national Interfaith Power & Light conference



LeeAnne Beres and Jessie Dye with members of the Acacia Foundation

An Interfaith Approach to Environmental Protection

The Acacia Foundation, a Turkish Muslim cultural and service organization, invited Earth Ministry/Washington Interfaith Power & Light staff to present at an Earth Day luncheon on interfaith environmental efforts.

The voices of people of all faiths are becoming increasingly important in protecting God's creation. Jessie Dye of Earth Ministry/WAIPPL discussed how Christians, Muslims, and Jews — the Abrahamic religious traditions — share many values in common, including good stewardship of Earth's resources and concern for the poor.

The 30 attendees learned about how religious groups are taking a stand against coal export and toxic pollution in Washington State, and they discussed the importance of an interfaith approach to protecting the earth's climate and water.

Toxic Port Tour: Lessons in Environmental Justice

Earth Ministry partnered with Puget Sound Sage and two United Church of Christ (UCC) congregations on a Toxic Port Tour in Seattle on March 16.

Earth Ministry Executive Director and UCC member LeeAnne Beres kicked off the tour with an overview of UCC engagement in environmental justice issues and of shared religious values that call us to care for our neighbors and all of God's creation. Participants then boarded a bus for a three-hour tour through the Port of Seattle and its adjoining neighborhoods.

Kendall Baker, a lead organizer from Admiral UCC, summed up the experience: "We saw justice issues on pollution from diesel fumes emitted by idling semi-trucks and from storm water flowing through scrap metal yards into the river. We learned about exploitation of immigrant contract workers whose low-pay, high-risk work is to haul shipping containers from the port to trains or warehouses."

Interfaith Harmony Week

Earth Ministry/WAIPPL staff joined over 40 religious and community leaders from Christian, Jewish, and Muslim traditions on February 7 to commemorate Interfaith Harmony Week.

Interfaith Harmony Week was unanimously adopted by the United Nations in 2010 to be observed during the first week of February. It provides a time when all people of goodwill can recognize that the common values we hold far outweigh the differences between us.

Seattle's event was hosted by the School of Theology and Ministry at Seattle University and featured a panel comprised of a rabbi, an imam/sheik, and a minister discussing "What are the barriers to the harmony we seek?" Following the panel presentation, there was time for lively discussion both with the panelists and among participants of different faiths.



Rabbi Alan Cook, Janice Tufte, LeeAnne Beres, Jessie Dye, and event organizer Rabbi Anson Laytner at Seattle University's Interfaith Harmony Week dinner

Be Still and Know that I am God By Deanna Matzen

Fellow earth-keepers, do you ever feel overwhelmed by the good work of creation care? Not only do we live in a busy society, but our calling to protect the environment can be a demanding one. As we enter summer, a traditional season of play and rest, I want to explore the antidote to being overworked — Sabbath, a purposeful break from our labors to honor and rest in God.

Some New Testament scholars tell us that Jesus' death and resurrection gives us the ultimate Sabbath rest from the work of our salvation. This means we are saved by grace, not by works. If you are like me, you do not engage in creation care in order to earn God's favor but in response to your love for God and your neighbors.

But do we really let the gift of grace permeate into our everyday lives as earth-keepers? Do we rest in the presence of God even from our efforts to care for creation, trusting that God is at work when we are not? Or do we engage in this

work with a manic sense of responsibility, fearing that if we do not keep moving, nothing will get done?

Somewhere along the way, we diverged from a conscientious observance of Sabbath to a Puritan work ethic that vilifies rest as laziness. But even Jesus departed from the crowds to a quiet place to pray and commune with God. This was an act of submission that kept Jesus connected with the will and the work of God. The humanity of Jesus, though sinless, was still fatigued and in need of rejuvenation.

Psalms 46:10 tells us to "Be still and know that I am God;" it is a command to rest, to quiet ourselves, to stop working. It is a command to remember that we are finite and that God is infinite. "Be still" can also be translated as "cease striving." Understandably, the environmental movement can be consumed with striving — the work is necessary, the cost of inaction is great.

But what we as the faith community can offer to this work is our reliance on the spirit of the living God, who is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble (Psalm 46:1). We need not fear though the earth should change, the mountains slip into the sea, though the water roar and foam (Psalm 46:2-3) because God is in the midst of her, she will not be moved, God will help her at the break of day (Psalm 46:5).

If the holy work of creation care, which in and of itself fulfills the spirit and intent of the Sabbath law, has become a burden to your heart and soul, I encourage you to take a Sabbath even from these good efforts. Take some time to be still and to reconnect with the holiness that first called you to care for God's good earth and let it be the strength that moves you forward.

"Be still and know that I am God" is the Sabbath call to all who are weary.



Deanna Matzen is editor of Earth Letter and a former Earth Ministry staff and board member.

An Auto Sabbatical By Jessie Dye

My beloved Subaru Outback (RIP 1998-2013) died last month of a fatal motor attack. It had a good life carrying kids and dogs, and many Earthcorps international exchange students learned to drive in it. It enjoyed frequent trips to the mountains and to Costco. With an odometer reading almost 225,000 miles, it was done. I will donate its body to charity.

This month, I am intentionally carless on a sabbatical from driving. Seattle has a terrific bus system and I have strong legs and two good dogs who love to walk. Friends will give me rides. Work is only four miles from my home. I can do this.

But every time I leave the house, I have to plan ahead and organize my route. Going anywhere takes much, much longer. It's incredibly inconvenient.

On the other hand, without a car, never have I felt more connected to life in the city. Our neighborhoods are intimate and joyful, local stores delight me, and buses are filled with hipsters, homeless people, and every stripe in between. Seattle seems like a large, generally benign green being within which I travel to discover previously unknown universes.

My personal addiction is to being hectic, to fling myself into action rather than reflection. If I'm not running around, I'm not comfortable in my own skin. Cars are the ultimate substance for those who get their identity from busyness. Not having a car means slowing way down, sitting with strangers, and connecting to the geography of the land rather than skating over it mindlessly.

At Earth Ministry, we have always encouraged our Greening Congregations to host car-less Sundays. Our members carpool, take the bus, bicycle, and walk. One pastor delivered a sermon in bike helmet and shorts.

It is easier in some places than others to avoid driving, but doing so is always good for our carbon footprint. If people of faith want to connect deeply with ourselves, each other, and God, slowing down to walk and share the journey is one way to begin.

There are organizations and businesses full of good ideas for alternatives to driving. Transportation Choices Coalition, one of Earth Ministry's environmental partners (www.transportationchoices.org), reports that "over the past 50 years,



the U.S. has developed a transportation system that is environmentally, economically, and socially unsustainable."

We need more and better transportation choices — real opportunities to take a bus, catch a train, ride a bike, or walk. Private companies like Zipcar and Car2Go support car sharing for those unholy trips to Costco. I have always hated bicycling, but many people swear by it, including my twenty-something son and my sixty-something dentist.

Cars are small, convenient boxes that keep us separate, isolated from each other and from the holy ground on which we walk. Living without one has given me the gift of walking, sharing rides, connecting with many different kinds of people, and being present in my neighborhood and city. I spend less money, walk a lot, and find more joy in my day.

Jessie Dye is Earth Ministry's Program and Outreach Director.

As religious leaders and their congregations go green, they've neglected one Judeo-Christian teaching that could cut energy consumption and pollution by 14.2857 percent.

Give the Earth a Sabbath Day

By Christopher D. Ringwald

That's one-seventh, just as the Sabbath halts work one day out of the weekly seven.

The day of rest — long considered a gift from God — is meant to create a joyful, liberating respite from worldly concerns such as work and consumption, activities that both use the earth's resources.

So renewed observance of the Sabbath could also be a gift to the air, land, and water that we consume the other six days of the week.

"Six days you shall labor and do all your work," Yahweh told the Israelites at Sinai, "but the seventh is a Sabbath of the Lord your God; you shall not do any work."

Jews have interpreted the Fourth Commandment to mean that they cease creative labor or work on the seventh day, or Saturday, just as God created the world in six days and then stopped. They leave nature alone for the day.

Even starting a fire is banned, so many Jews, mostly Orthodox, don't drive — since that involves combustion — and live within walking distance of their synagogue. In the

same spirit, Yahweh told the Israelites to leave fallow their farm fields during the sabbatical year, an ancient form of rejuvenating soil.

The early Christians switched their attention to Sunday, when Jesus rose from the dead. Like the Jews, some Christians consider the day itself to be holy and, traditionally, avoid anything that detracts from its divine nature: work, business, and shopping. Though their primary obligation is to attend services, they also imported the Sabbath spirit of rest and joy.

For Muslims, Friday is holy. They don't sanctify this "day of assembly," or Juma, with rest since God does not need rest. In the Koran, Allah directs Muslims to attend congregational prayers at midday but they can then return to work. But Friday is a day off in many Islamic countries, and Muslims consider Juma a time for charity, family, and quiet enjoyment.

Each religion's teaching makes a powerful case for calling it quits one day a week. Many nonreligious people take a weekly rest as well. If we all reduced our driving, shopping, business, and energy



consumption by one-seventh, we'd pollute that much less. We'd have to avoid energy-guzzling leisure activities, so maybe nix the long drives or movie marathons. Still, even if we left out the work and traffic that must go on — hospitals, police, utilities — the environmental boon would be significant.

Religious leaders have joined to battle global warming and preserve God's creation. But in their rush to recycle, reduce, and reuse, they have neglected the pollution-reducing potential of a full-day work stoppage.

The Evangelical Climate Initiative, launched in 2006 by 86 religious leaders, calls for international action but also directs concerned Christians to keep car tires properly inflated and walk or bike more. Why not invoke the Sabbath and suggest that people live near their church and keep Sunday holy by not shopping or working? Then they could skip all driving one day a week.

In a national campaign, hundreds of Jewish synagogues are installing compact fluorescent light bulbs. A good start, but by traditional rules, Jews would not turn on any electrical appliance on Shabbat, a much greater savings.

In its Shrinking the Footprint campaign, the Church of England also singled out bulb-replacement, as well as switching off parish photocopiers at night. How little to ask, compared with the Sundays of 100 years ago when all commerce halted on wharf and factory alike.

Global warming has united the monotheistic faiths despite their other frictions. Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and other religious leaders from around the world have convened symposiums on the environment. Together they could do much more by hewing to one of the oldest practices in their common tradition.

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Christopher D. Ringwald is a journalist, an educator, and the author of A Day Apart: How Jews, Christians, and Muslims Find Faith, Freedom, and Joy on the Sabbath.



THE SABBATH EFFECT

By Rev. Rebekah Simon-Peter

Jonathan Ormes, a retired NASA scientist, and I made plans to meet while I was on my way to lead a women's retreat on the topic of Sabbath and the environment. I wanted to talk with him about my theory that practicing Sabbath is an environmentally-friendly discipline.

"Absolutely," he said. "In fact, we can tell from space where and when people are observing the Sabbath all around the world."

"Really?" I asked. "From space?" This was better than I thought.

He said, "We can see that levels of nitrous oxides — byproducts of fossil-fuel combustion, among other things — fluctuate during the week. They go down on Friday in Islamic countries; down on Saturday in Israel; and down on Sunday in the United States, Europe, and Japan. Those levels don't go down at all in China; the numbers stay pretty steady throughout the week. This lowering of nitrous oxide levels is called the Sabbath effect or the weekend effect."

In other words, the less people drive and the less industry produces, the cleaner the air.

Excerpted from *Green Church: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rejoice!*

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Rev. Rebekah Simon-Peter is a United Methodist clergywoman. Her website is www.rebekahsimonpeter.com.

Connecting the Jewish Sabbath to the Environment

By Baruch Sienna

It is easy to connect the Jewish Sabbath to the environment. The Ten Commandments recall two themes for the Sabbath: in Exodus, the Sabbath is a reminder of creation (and God resting on the seventh day) and in Deuteronomy the Sabbath recalls the redemption of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery. Both themes contain an environmental message.

Rest on the Sabbath means to live in conscious harmony with nature. Work prohibited on the Jewish Sabbath — *Shabbat* in Hebrew — is the interference (constructive or destructive) with the natural world. It is enough that six days a week we harness natural resources. One day a week we need to be reminded “of our earthly status as tenant and not overlord. To rest is to acknowledge our limitations. One day out of seven we cease to exercise our power to tinker and transform” (Ismar Schorsch).

According to Jewish theologian Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, on the seventh day, we move from “the results of creation to the mystery of creation; from the world of creation to the creation of the world.” On Shabbat, we move from creation to Creator.

Shabbat also celebrates the Israelites’ freedom from slavery and the possibility of emancipation from oppression. We do not yet live in a perfect world, but Shabbat is a foretaste of that World to Come. The Sabbath serves as a sanctuary in time, because ordinary time no longer operates. We normally plan, prepare, invest, fix, and manipulate for some future goal. On Shabbat we do not have to do those tasks because we are totally in the moment. On Shabbat there is no past or future, only an eternal present.

Even if we don’t subscribe to traditional Jewish Sabbath observance, it is easy to see how Shabbat can be a model environmental day. Traditional Jewish prohibitions against manipulating nature and avoiding commerce, electricity or even car travel make Shabbat an environmentalist’s dream-come-true — a weekly earth-day celebrated 52 times a year!

Just like animals rested on Shabbat, we should consider giving our cars the day off, and walking, biking, or using alternative forms of transportation. Imagine if one day a week we walked instead of using our cars, cultivated our inner lives

instead of being slaves to commerce and technology, and appreciated nature instead of exploiting its resources. Shabbat also declares a truce to consumerism and provides one No Shopping Day every week.

Finally, technology has become pervasive and we suffer from our inability

to turn it off: spouses checking their email in bed before falling asleep or get work messages while on vacation. Parents are often unable to fully listen to their children when their smartphone signals that they have received a text.

Some creative folks have come up with The Sabbath Manifesto, a creative project designed to slow down lives in an increasing hectic world. You don’t have to be Jewish to

take a break from electronic taskmasters. Try having one day a week to unplug, a day that can be dedicated to spending more time outside and with families and friends.

Excerpt adapted from *The Natural Bible*.

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Baruch Sienna is an environmental Jewish educator, technologist, and graphic designer. He is the author of The Natural Bible, available for the iPad through iTunes. Learn more at www.thenaturalbible.weebly.com.



Leaving a Legacy to Earth Ministry through Planned Giving

Support Earth Ministry through EarthShare Washington!

Earth Ministry's 20th Anniversary Celebration on April 19 was a fabulous event. The room was alive with the sounds of people having a great time. It drew together long-time Earth Ministry supporters and new friends.

One typical comment was how many young people were in attendance, fully engaged in the work of caring for creation. One pastor observed, "It makes me happy to know that when it's time for our generation to go, the work won't die with us." That same pastor recently decided to leave a legacy to Earth Ministry in his will.

Making a planned gift to Earth Ministry is an excellent way to support the growing community of young adults who understand the deep need for spiritual and moral leadership to protect the environment. Young people are some of Earth Ministry's most active volunteers, and leaving a legacy gift to Earth Ministry is a wonderful way to support the next generation of religious voices for the earth's atmosphere and ecosystems.

Estate planning is important for everyone. It can begin by simply writing a will, but it can also involve changing beneficiaries of life insurance policies and retirement accounts, and providing for your charitable interests through planned giving. For our many wonderful elders who have nurtured Earth Ministry over the years, leaving a bequest to Earth Ministry is a meaningful way to ensure this good work continues through the next generation.

Look for more information about Earth Ministry's new planned giving program later this year, and please join us in leaving a legacy to protect all of God's children.



Do you know that there is a way to contribute to Earth Ministry through your workplace? For over 25 years, EarthShare Washington (www.esw.org) has helped companies and employees connect with, contribute to, and volunteer for outstanding environmental and conservation organizations. Earth Ministry is one of these organizations!

EarthShare of Washington helps companies **connect** employees to corporate sustainability initiatives — offering tips, speakers, and inspiring stories to show why sustainability practices are important.

Businesses **contribute** to leading environmental charities by establishing an **employee giving program** or expanding an existing employee giving program to include EarthShare Washington's more than sixty vetted environmental charities. Employees of companies that are part of EarthShare report a strong sense of satisfaction that their companies offer green giving options.

EarthShare creates **volunteer** opportunities with conservation organizations, such as engaging employees in a team-building, hands-on volunteer project like a beach cleanup or park restoration. Volunteering together creates strong employee satisfaction and loyalty.

Earth Ministry has partnered with EarthShare Washington for five years. As in so many areas, Earth Ministry brings a new constituency to workplace giving and allows companies and organizations to increase the reach of their generosity.

Contact Chris Olson at Earth Ministry (206-632-2426 or chris@earthministry.org) for more information on how to designate Earth Ministry as a beneficiary through EarthShare workplace giving or how to sign your company up with EarthShare!

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The fourth commandment says that we don't work on Stop Day. We don't make our sons work; we don't make our daughters work; we don't make anybody in our household work. We don't make strangers work; we don't make undocumented immigrants work; we don't make minimum wage employees work. We don't make anything work, including the cattle and the chicken and the sheep. We stop. We cool our jets. We just idle our engines on that day.

When my wife Nancy started teaching, she had a student named Clinton. His essay on the first day of class was three pages long. It didn't have a comma; it didn't have a period; it didn't have a paragraph. It was a three-page, run-on sentence.

I don't think God intended our lives to be like that paper — just one long, run-on sentence. The work of our life is meant to be punctuated by rest. Musicians talk about this. They say that it's not the notes that make the song, but the pauses in-between the notes. This rhythm is equally true for our lives.

GROUNDING IN SABBATH

The word *holy* first occurs in the second chapter of Genesis. The seventh day is blessed as holy because the Lord stopped and rested. Stopping and resting are the working definitions of holy.

But instead of resting, we move and move and don't stop to know what we are walking on. We are ungrounded. No place means much of anything to us. When no place is our home, then the whole earth is reduced to a commodity. The most we can be is consumers.

The Sabbath commandments contained in the Old Testament set the worth of all things. The ground is allowed to rest every seventh year. The newborn calf cannot be taken immediately from its mother. The fruit tree has a right to exist in a time of war.



While I do not advocate the throwing over of civil law in favor of Old Testament law, I do believe in the inherent worth that God places in creation. Often we see no worth in what the Lord created beyond its mere utilitarian value. We talk about forests as timber and flowers as bouquets.

Yet when God placed the trees on the earth, God said that they are pleasing to the eye (Genesis 2:9). God dresses the lilies of the field more lavishly than a king or queen (Matthew 6:28–29). God's soliloquy to Job is about the mystery and beauty that creation has beyond its usefulness to humanity.

When we take Paul's words to the Colossians to heart — "Everything was created through him and for him. He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together" (Colossians 1:16–17) — we realize that the very ground we walk on and the air we breathe are the constant outpouring of God's creativity and love.

WHAT'S MISSING MATTERS

Why in the last few decades has the Church decided to throw out the fourth commandment? Why have we dismissed our day of rest? Which commandment are we going to throw out next?

What does Jesus have say about the longest of the Ten Commandments — to keep a day of rest once a week? He clarifies that this is a day dedicated to God, so it's okay to feed the hungry. It's okay to take care of the sick. It's okay to go and rescue an animal. But we're still supposed to "Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy." Jesus isn't a legalist. Instead, he's about the intent behind the laws.

The Bible is about people trying to have a relationship with God while existing in a fallen world. Yet in our twenty-

first century culture, we're not content just to live in a fallen world: we're putting rocket boosters on our backs to accelerate our descent. And because our relationship with God is intertwined with how we care for creation and for our global neighbors, when we don't spend enough time with God, all our relationships are adversely affected.

A day of rest counteracts this downward trajectory. It's about restraint. And that restraint is needed now more than ever.

THE SABBATH FOR US

Sabbath doesn't just happen. You have to prepare for it. The day before the Sabbath, my wife and I always clean the house. We pay bills, answer emails, go grocery shopping, and prepare food so that on the Sabbath we can truly rest.

Sabbath morning, we almost always take a long walk. Nancy reads the Bible. I take a nap. We rest in rest. If there's an important deadline approaching and it seems like we just have to get it done, we stop. We trust in God's promise that six days of work each week is enough.

If you can't imagine twenty-four hours of rest, start with four or six hours of holy rest. Stopping is about restraint. It's not about doing everything that we can do. It's about finding the peace of God that passes all understanding.

The Sabbath was not meant to be saved by humanity; rather, humanity was meant to be saved by the Sabbath. I know from first-hand experience. After practicing the Sabbath for almost a decade, I have seen how it has saved me from the disease of workaholism. It has saved countless numbers of my patients from the physical, emotional, and spiritual consequences of

unremitting stress. If practiced regularly, the Sabbath can save you, too.

Indeed, the future of our planet may very well depend upon Sabbath rest. The 24/6 life allows us to see the earth not as an object for consumption but as a subject for relationship. It reminds us that God made the earth to meet every generation's needs, not just one generation's desires.

I pray that you remember to open up this gift of stopping one day a week. I pray that you find peace in this weekly oasis of time. I pray that you will be still and that, through rest, you will come to know God. And it will be good.

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Earth Ministry's 20th Anniversary Celebration

On Friday, April 19, over 350 members and supporters filled Saint Mark's Cathedral in Seattle to overflowing to celebrate Earth Ministry's 20th Anniversary. It was a wonderful evening, filled with energy and a strong sense of community.



From the beginning, the room was full of high spirits and the steady buzz of friends new and old catching up and sharing stories. Everyone enjoyed organic, local food and sustainable beer & wine while listening to the sounds of the Dave Bush Jazz Trio and perusing our many exciting raffle items. Throughout it all, we had a lot of fun taking silly pictures in the Photo Booth!

Our emcees for the evening were Board Chair Brian Naasz and Program & Outreach Director Jessie Dye, who kept the audience laughing. The Very Rev. Steve Thomason, Dean of Saint Mark's, welcomed everyone to "the people's Cathedral" and highlighted Earth Ministry's founding out of Saint Mark's Ecology and Spirituality Committee in the late 1980's by Carla Pryne and Jim & Ruth Mulligan.

Executive Director LeeAnne Beres invoked Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's powerful words in *A Letter from the Birmingham Jail*, encouraging people of faith to stand up and do what is right in troubling times — which rings as true today as 50 years ago. She also thanked the many people who played a role in Earth Ministry's considerable successes over the years.





Earth Ministry co-founder Rev. Carla Pryne presented the Founders Award to Holy Cross Lutheran from Bellevue, WA, in recognition of their leadership, vision, faith, and passion for creation care. We were also proud to present the Rising Star Award to St. Mary's Parish Youth Group from Seattle, WA, in honor of their efforts engaging their peers and the whole parish in environmental stewardship — in both English and Spanish.

Our featured speakers were KC Golden, a nationally-known pioneer in developing cutting-edge climate policies, and Dana Olson, a young adult member of Earth Ministry and environmental consultant. The two highlighted Earth Ministry's ability to bring a unique moral voice to public policy issues and to engage and empower young people to care for creation. Thanks to you, we met our fundraising goals and introduced many new people to the good work of Earth Ministry. It has been an amazing 20 years but we know the best is yet to come!



Many thanks to our 20th Anniversary Celebration Sponsors

Episcopal Diocese of Olympia

Sisters of Providence

Emmanuel Episcopal Church

Thanks also to Fremont Brewing and our Celebration Hosts and Volunteers!

A Call to Prayer

from The United Nations Environmental Sabbath Service

We who have lost our sense and our senses —
our touch, our smell, our vision of who we are;
we who frantically force and press all things,
without rest for body or spirit,
hurting our earth and injuring ourselves:
we call a halt.

We want to rest.

We need to rest and allow the earth to rest.

We need to reflect and to rediscover the mystery that lives in us,
that is the ground of every unique expression of life,
the source of the fascination that calls all things to communion.

We declare a Sabbath,
a space of quiet:
for simple being and letting be;
for recovering the great, forgotten truths;
for learning how to live again.

