

Slide 1



Interfaith
Partners for the
CHESAPEAKE

Water Unites Us All:
Creation Care &
Watershed Restoration

www.interfaithchesapeake.org

The slide features a logo in the top left corner with a circular icon containing a sun and waves, followed by the text 'Interfaith Partners for the CHESAPEAKE'. The main title is centered over a background of stylized waves in shades of blue and teal. The website address is located in a small white box in the bottom right corner.

God Calls Us to Care for Creation and One Another



Love neighbor as ourselves: teachings from several faith traditions

Intro to Caring for Creation= as Expression of our faith in action:

Loving our Creator

Loving our Neighbor

Loving our Children and Grandchildren

Water is Sacred
Water Connects us to each other



How we treat water is a reflection of our love
and respect for God and others

“How we treat water is a reflection of our **relationship with God.**” “Respect for water shows **love for our brothers and sisters and all of Creation.**”

Watershed twist on the Golden Rule: *Do unto others downstream as you would have those upstream do unto you.* - Wendell Berry

Environmental degradation impacts the poor the most

Faith communities respond to social justice issues such as poverty, homelessness, joblessness – how do we compete with that?

We don't have to compete – in fact, caring the Earth is caring for each other

Bay health = job security for oystermen

Clean Anacostia = source of reliable food for the poorest of the poor

Reduction in flooding = less disruption and financial loss for vulnerable populations

Connect the dots for them

Concept of Watershed Communities – help them see who else is in their community

Slide 4



Let Justice Roll down like Waters (Amos 5:24)

Water is an Environmental & Social Justice issue: Examples of disparities in justice (recreation, working environment):

Some can cool off in a local pool, perhaps even in their own back yard,
While others go to the local stream or creek, where water is probably not safe.
Some can shop the periphery of the grocery store to find their seafood,
While others go to the local river to fish. - e.g. documented 17,000 people a year fish in the Anacostia River, among the top 10 most polluted rivers in the US
Some can work in a climate controlled office, with a huge carbon footprint of energy use,
while others, like the watermen work on the water where the fishing catch has severely declined.

Slide 5



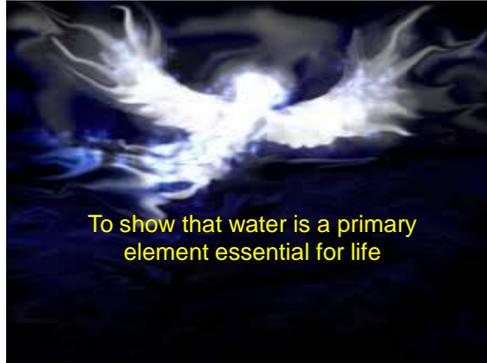
From the beginning of Genesis, God has a relationship with water.

Water As GOD's First
Relationship



Slide 7

GOD Chose Water



To show that water is a primary
element essential for life

All life depends upon water.

WATER in the Bible



John 4:7-15
Samaritan woman: *Give me a drink.... Where do you get that living water?*
Jesus: *The water that I give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.*

Isaiah 43:16-21
*See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.*

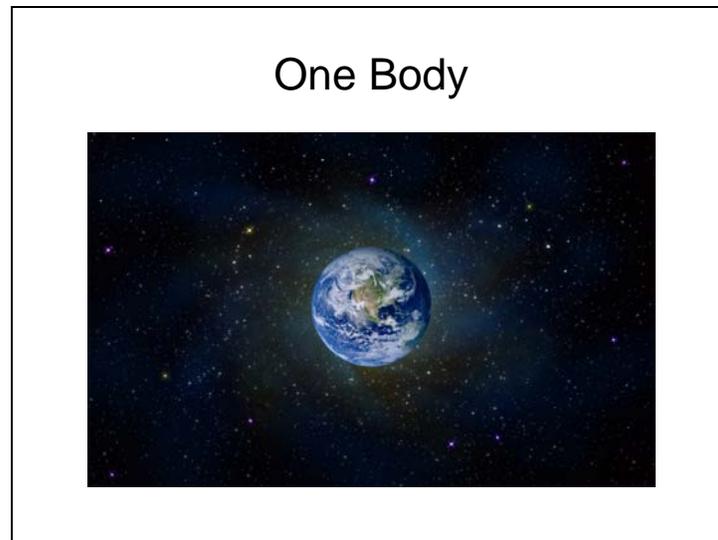
Psalm 104:10-13
You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills, giving drink to every wild animal; the wild asses quench their thirst. By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation; they sing among the branches.

Some examples of the many references to water in the Bible. But teachings about the sacredness of water and care for Creation are not limited to the Judo-Christian traditions.

Faith Teachings on care for the environment



- Christian - connect water with baptism and stewardship; broaden "love thy neighbor" to natural world
- Jewish - Tikkun O'lam, repair and restoration of the whole world. Mikvah – a ritual bath
- Muslim - unique role and responsibility of the human to be guardians of God's Creation. Ablution – preparing for prayer
- Buddhist – interconnectedness of all life, compassion for the suffering of the natural and human world
- Sikh - Air is the Teacher, Water is the Father and Earth is the Great Divine Mother of All and we must respect and protect her -Guru Nanak



Another faith “lens” with which to view our human role with Creation is viewing the whole universe as one body. Some refer to this as Gaia – the whole earth as one interrelated and interdependent organism.

Faith teachings on “one body”

- Christian: Colossians 1:16-17 For in Christ all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, Christ is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.
- Jewish: according to mystical Kabbalah tradition *tzelem elohim*, the Image of God extended the sense of the Image not only to the human species but to the universe as a whole and therefore all the beings within it.
- Buddhist: The whole universe is interdependent (like parts of a body) and we must listen with compassion to cries of the earth suffering

IPC's motto:
*Forming Faithful
Stewards,
Caring for
Sacred Waters*

*"We're way
upstream – we
go for the soul!"*

*- Board Chair
Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin*



Our Local Context: *Watershed Stewardship*



We are persuaded that the best way to orient the church's ecological work and witness is through bioregional literacy, planning and action, which focus on the actual watersheds that we inhabit.
– Ched Myers, Theologian
<http://watersheddiscipleship.org/>

3 Elements:
1) Ecological Readings of Scripture
2) "Re-placed" Theology, Spirituality and Practices
3) Watershed Ecclesiology

We live in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed

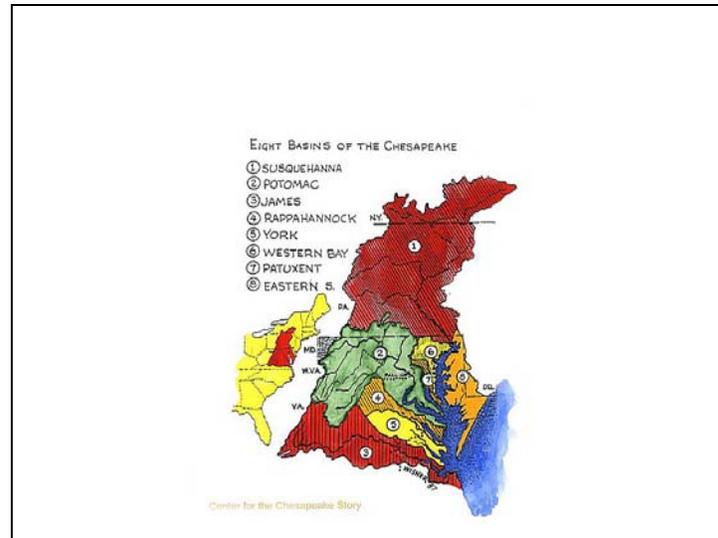
What is a Watershed?

A watershed is the area of land where all of the water that is under it or drains off of it goes into the same place. John Wesley Powell, scientist geographer, put it best when he said that a watershed is:

"that area of land, a bounded hydrologic system, within which all living things are inextricably linked by their common water course and where, as humans settled, simple logic demanded that they become part of a community."

Our churches are well-situated to become centers for learning and loving local places as well as defending and restoring them. But we must ourselves "re-inhabit" these places as church, letting the landscapes around us shape our symbolic life and imagination as well as our material habits.

We think such a working alliance can focalize and amplify these perspectives, and help build capacity for a Christian discipleship defined by commitment to healing our world by restoring the health of our respective watersheds. If our churches can "do their work" around these issues, we can not only recover the soul of our tradition, but will also make an enormous contribution to the wider historic struggle to reverse our ecological catastrophe.



The Chesapeake Bay Watershed is that vast area (64,000 sq. miles) within which all surface water drainage—ditches, creeks, streams, rivers, tributaries of all sorts—ultimately empty into the Chesapeake Bay. The watershed extends from Western New York State, though Pennsylvania, Maryland, the District of Columbia, parts Delaware, West Virginia and central and northern Virginia. The condition of the Chesapeake Bay is rated a "D" with fish and marine life severely impacted by pollution.



Runoff is the #1 source of water pollution into the Chesapeake Bay from urban and suburban locations.

What can your congregation do?

- In-the-ground projects on their property
 - Tree-plantings
 - Rain gardens
 - Rain barrels
 - Downspout disconnection
 - Community gardens
 - Parking lot changes to control runoff
- Letter-writing on public issues
- Host IPC speakers



Trees for Sacred Places project is offered here in Montgomery County. This program is a collaboration with our partner, the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. Along with free trees, we offers spiritual and environmental education. Contact IPC if you have congregational property that can accommodate more than 40 trees.

Why Plant Trees?

Benefits for whole ecosystem/ harmony in Creation
Contributes to: health & healing the web of life

- Watershed stewardship
- Restore habitat for wildlife
- Filter pollution, prevent runoff, improve water quality
- Prevent soil erosion
- Reduce carbon footprint



"the leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations" Rev. 22:2

Examples: from American Forests, Tree Facts <http://www.americanforests.org/discover-forests/tree-facts/>

+Planting trees is an expression of our faith / spiritual traditions which call for our stewardship of the earth.

+Reforestation provides homes and food for native plants, animals, and birds to flourish. E.g. A native oak tree provides food for 534 species of beneficial insects and small mammals.

+In one day, one large tree can lift up to 100 gallons of water out of the ground and discharge it into the air. For every five percent of tree cover added to a community, stormwater runoff is reduced by approximately two percent, increasing the cleanliness of water for all human and other-than human inhabitants.

+Tree roots hold soil in place, and tree branches help lessen the impact of rain on the soil. Fallen leaves improve soil quality. Forests act as reservoirs, providing natural flood control.

+A tree can absorb as much as 48 pounds of carbon dioxide per year, and can sequester one ton of carbon dioxide by the time it reaches 40 years old. Trees properly placed around buildings can reduce air conditioning needs by 30 percent and save 20-50 percent in energy used for heating.

The net cooling effect of a young, healthy tree is equivalent to ten room-size air conditioners operating 20 hours a day.

Living Waters & Tree of Life



Symbols of both water and the tree of life signifying healing are found in many cultures and religions.

Imagine the Potential...

- Montgomery County, MD : 733
- Maryland : 5,336

Start the Ripple Effect!

*Data from the Association of Religion Data Archives
<http://www.thearda.com/rcms2010/>



Reiterating that individual parcels of privately owned institutional land can add up to making a huge difference in watershed restoration, consider these possible ripple effects of engaging and collaborating with the faith community.

**Our faith calls us to be
healers of the earth**



We are called to assist the earth, to heal her wounds and in the process heal our own—indeed, to embrace the whole Creation in all its diversity, beauty and wonder.

When we plant trees, we plant seeds of peace and hope.

—Dr. Wangari Maathai
2004 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

founder, Green Belt reforestation movement,
planted over 51 million trees
planted in Kenya



Wangari Maathai won the Noble Peace Prize in 2004 when she organized to respond to the terrible deforestation in her country by teaching women how to plant trees. Restored clean water, prevented soil erosion, and helped land to become fruitful again. Over 30,000 women trained in forestry, food processing, bee-keeping, and other trades that help them earn income while preserving their lands and resources. Communities in Kenya (both men and women) have been motivated and organized to both prevent further environmental destruction and restore that which has been damaged.

Slide 21

Contact us for more resources you can use for worship planning, workshops, and religious education.

www.interfaithchesapeake.org

Click “Join”

in upper right-hand corner to sign up for email list

Kolya Braun-Greiner, Program Manager
301-909-8943
kolya@interfaithchesapeake.org

Jodi Rose, Executive Director
410-609-6852
jodi@interfaithchesapeake.org