

Dear Rabbi Serotta,

I'm writing with the hope that the Interfaith Council of Metropolitan Washington will introduce The Clergy Letter Project to your members and inform them of our effort to mobilize clergy to take action to address the climate crisis.

The Clergy Letter Project is an organization of more than 17,100 clergy from all corners of the United States and from a wide array of religions. We came together to advocate for the position that religion and science need not be in conflict. Our efforts have been formally endorsed by the United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Society for Humanistic Judaism, the Humanist Society, the Southeast Florida Diocese of the Episcopal Church, and the Southwestern Washington Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Our most recent initiative is the creation of a powerful letter explaining why clergy must play a leading role in helping to ameliorate the climate crisis we are facing. The letter was written by a team of clergy and scientists and demonstrates that both religion and science lead us to the same conclusion, "We must take immediate action." The letter also asks the following provocative question, "**How can we be good ancestors?**" The letter can be found at [http://www.theclergyletterproject.org/Climate\\_Letter/ClimateLtr.html](http://www.theclergyletterproject.org/Climate_Letter/ClimateLtr.html) and is also attached below my signature block. A flyer for potential distribution is attached to this email.

The impact of this letter will grow as the number of clergy who endorse and sign it increases. It is for that reason that I hope you will help by circulating information about our efforts to your members.

Thank you for taking the time to read this note and for any steps you might be able to take. Please feel free to contact me regarding this matter and I look forward to hearing back from you.

Michael

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## The Climate Crisis: A Clergy Call to Action

We are faced with a crisis today.

A multitude of human activities including the use of fossil fuels, large-scale agriculture, and large-scale land clearance have modified the natural processes that sustain life in every ecosystem and culture on the entire planet. This is no longer a question for debate. The question we (humans) must answer—and the impetus for this letter—is: “How will we respond to this crisis?”

We call on leaders from all of the many faith traditions and ethical communities throughout the world to unite with scientists, activists, and concerned citizens as one voice in calling for humanity to recognize the crisis, our role in creating it, and our collective responsibility to immediately identify and enact solutions.

Scientific understandings and religious teachings alike teach us that we are connected as one human family and, further, we are connected to all life. Thus, our own survival is inextricably connected to the responsible stewardship of the Earth and all its creatures.

The many faith traditions that exist across the world, while differing in specific beliefs and expressions of their convictions, share many common values. One of those is a commitment to care for the disenfranchised. We know that the people with the least access to resources experience the greatest suffering as a result of a changing climate. Ecological insecurity reinforces inequality. We have a moral and ethical responsibility to advocate for those who are vulnerable and/or voiceless.

We clergy signing this letter pledge ourselves to express our love for humanity and for all life on Earth by advocating for an immediate change in our behaviors that continue to threaten the health of the planet, its people, and their varied cultures. We urge you to join us in the education and motivation of our fellow planetary citizens, and to help us unite and to take the steps urgently needed to save our home.

We must remember, in this work, to be kind to one another. It is easy to let the panic, the frustration, and the pain turn us against one another, to speak in harsh judgment, and to act in self-righteous anger, but we will only move forward together. It is not only important *what we do* but *how we do it*. We must acknowledge our shared needs and celebrate our differences in meeting them – but do so with a compassionate, honest, and committed regard for the Earth and its inhabitants. This is what brings us joy in the work and hope for the future.

The climate is changing, but there is also evidence of a changing climate in public opinion and resolve. People are ready to insist on and be a part of the necessary change. People are ready to explore what it takes to remake our societies in response to this challenge; to turn the world around.

Our religious communities should lead in asking a simple question: ***How can we be good ancestors?*** A powerful question. A spiritual practice. A call to action.

Join us in this work. The time is now.