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Cal-Nev Climate Justice Ministries

Advent Special Issue

"Climate justice through faith-inspired connection, education, advocacy, and action"

Christmas and Creation Care



Advent begins on Sunday December 1st. We remember particularly at this time of year that God loves the world and sent us God's own Son as a gift, as a light that shines in the darkness. And we cling to the hope and promise expressed by the prophet Isaiah:

*The people who had been living in darkness have seen a great light.
The light of life has shined on those who dwelt in the shadowy darkness of death.
Hope of all hopes, dream of our dreams, a child is born, sweet-breathed;
a son is given to us: a living gift.
He will ensure justice without fail and absolute equity. Always.*

(Part of Isaiah 9:2,6-7 from the Voice translation)

God loves the world and that includes the whole of creation. How can we share that love this Christmas in a worship-filled way that truly honors the whole world and brings justice and light into the darkness?

In this special advent emailing you will find some ideas:

- an [idea for an Advent Discipline](#)
- a [list of books on Climate Change](#) that would make wonderful Christmas gifts
- a [set of tips and giving ideas](#) from the UM Creation Justice movement

Blessings and a Happy Thanksgiving to you all,

[Rev. Joan Pell](#)

Chair, California-Nevada Climate Justice Ministries Task Force

Getting Outdoors as an Advent Discipline

In our [October newsletter](#), we announced that one of the year's goals discerned by the Cal-Nevada Conference Climate Justice Task Force is to encourage all church members to spend at least 10 minutes outdoors each day. Our hope with this goal is to nurture the love of Creation which motivates people of faith to stay engaged in the challenging work of climate justice. Such a practice also is good for our mental health; it can keep us from descending into hopelessness and despair (which is, sadly, all too pervasive a condition in the human world these days).

If you have not already cultivated a "10 minute a day" habit, why not begin this as an Advent discipline? Don't let the rain stop you; bundle up and get outside for a little while. It will do you a world of good.

In her lovely devotional book, [All Creation Waits: The Advent Mystery of New Beginnings](#) (beautifully illustrated by David G. Klein), author Gayle Boss shares thoughtful observations concerning how animals prepare for the winter. She notes that they do not seem to experience the anxiety that humans do at the prospect of oncoming shortened days and cold weather. Instead, "animals unselfconsciously and forthrightly offer unfearful responses ...they adapt in many amazing and ingenious ways. They shape themselves to life as it is given. All of them enact heart and soul realities for us. Each in its way says: *The dark is not an end, but a door. This is the way a new beginning comes*" (p. xv).

As you spend time outdoors this Advent -- perhaps in the same place every day -- notice how life adjusts to the changing of seasons. Which creatures are migrating? Which are going into hibernation? How are the plants and the soil responding to rain? Can you catch a glimpse of the complicated systems at work which capture moisture and nutrients and share them? What lessons might you learn from your more-than-human neighbors?

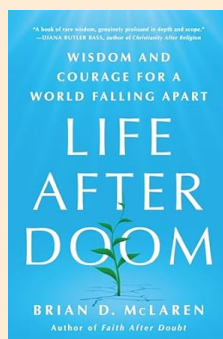
Submitted by task force member [Rev. Laurie Bayen](#)

Christmas Gifts

Climate Change Book List

Below are some suggestions of books that you might like to purchase for Christmas gifts or add to your own Christmas wish list. Most are also available as e-books. You can find them at many online booksellers, but your local small independent bookstore may be able to help you too.

Consider also telling your loves ones that you would love to talk to them about the book when they have finished reading it.



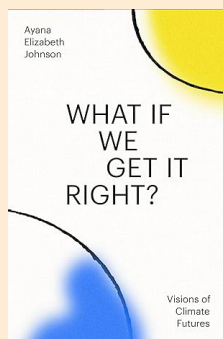
[Life After Doom: Wisdom and Courage for a World Falling Apart](#)

Author: Brian McLaren

Publisher: St. Martin's Essentials

Publication Date: May 2024

McLaren defines doom as the “un-peaceful, uneasy, unwanted feeling” that “we humans have made a mess of our civilization and our planet, and not enough of us seem to care enough to change deeply enough or quickly enough to save ourselves.” Blending insights from philosophers, poets, scientists, and theologians, Life After Doom explores the complexity of hope, the necessity of grief, and the need for new ways of thinking, becoming, and belonging in turbulent times. If you want to help yourself, your family, and the communities to which you belong to find courage and resilience for the deeply challenging times that are upon us — this is the book you need right now.



[What If We Get It Right? Visions of Climate Futures](#)

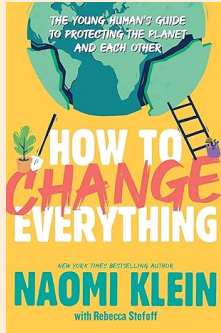
Author: Ayana Elizabeth Johnson

Publisher: One World

Publication Date: September 2024

Our climate future is not yet written. What if we act as if we love the future? Sometimes the bravest thing we can do while facing an existential crisis is imagine life on the other side. This provocative and joyous book maps an inspiring landscape of possible climate futures. Through clear-eyed essays and vibrant conversations,

infused with data, poetry, and art, Ayana Elizabeth Johnson guides us through solutions and possibilities at the nexus of science, policy, culture, and justice. Visionary farmers and financiers, architects and advocates, help us conjure a flourishing future, one worth the effort it will take—from every one of us, with whatever we have to offer—to create.



[How to Change Everything: The Young Human's Guide to Protecting the Planet and Each Other](#)

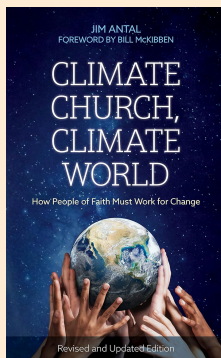
Author: Naomi Klein

Publisher: Atheneum Books for Young Readers

Publication Date: February 2021

Reading Age: 10 years and up

Full of empowering stories of young leaders all over the world, this information-packed book from award-winning journalist and one of the foremost voices for climate justice, Naomi Klein, offers young readers a comprehensive look at the state of the climate today and how we got here, while also providing the tools they need to join this fight to protect and reshape the planet they will inherit.



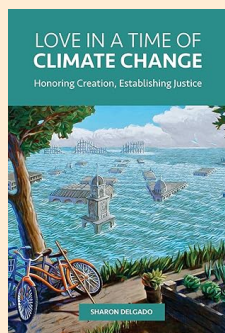
[Climate Church, Climate World: How People of Faith Must Work for Change](#)

Author: Jim Antal

Publisher: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers

Publication Date: Revised and Updated , March 2023

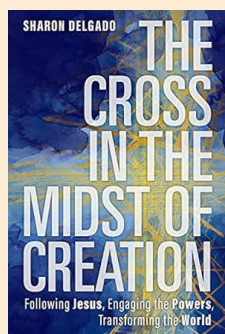
Climate Church, Climate World contends that climate change is the greatest moral challenge humanity has ever faced. Environmental advocate Rev. Jim Antal calls on the church to meet this moral challenge by embracing new approaches to worship, preaching, witnessing, and other spiritual practices that honor creation and cultivate hope. The revised and updated edition includes a new chapter on political and policy shifts under the Trump and Biden administrations; the influence of Greta Thunberg and climate change activists; and updated information on the current science of climate change.



[Love in a Time of Climate Change:
Honoring Creation, Establishing Justice](#)

Author: Sharon Delgado
Publisher: Fortress Press
Publication Date: July 2017

This book, written by Rev. Sharon Delgado, a member of our task force, challenges readers to develop a loving response to climate change, which disproportionately harms the poor, threatens future generations, and damages God's creation. This book creatively adapts John Wesley's theological method by using scripture, tradition, reason, and experience to explore the themes of creation and justice in the context of the earth's changing climate. *Note: An updated Second Edition of *Love in a Time of Climate Change* will be released in the spring of 2025.*

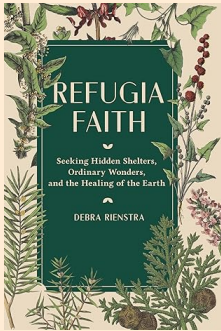


[The Cross in the Midst of Creation:
Following Jesus, Engaging the Powers,
Transforming the World](#)

Author: Sharon Delgado
Publisher: Fortress Press
Publication Date: June 2022

This book, written by Rev. Sharon Delgado, a member of our task force, links Christian understandings of creation, atonement, and the biblical principalities and powers. Sharon asserts that the crucifixion is ongoing as institutional powers diminish human life and destroy creation, and that the resurrection is ongoing as faith

overcomes despair and the Spirit equips people to rise in courage and follow Jesus into the heart of the struggle for a transformed world.



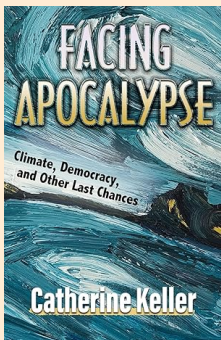
[Refugia Faith: Seeking Hidden Shelters, Ordinary Wonders, and the Healing of the Earth](#)

Author: Debra Rienstra

Publisher: Fortress Press

Publication Date: February 2022

Refugia (reh-FU-jee-ah) is a biological term describing places of shelter where life endures in times of crisis, such as a volcanic eruption, fire, or stressed climate. Ideally, these refugia endure, expand, and connect so that new life emerges. Debra Rienstra explores how Christian spirituality and practice must adapt to prepare for life on a climate-altered planet. She asks, in this era of ecological devastation, how can Christians become people of refugia?



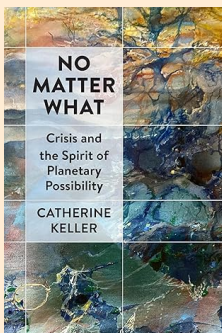
[Facing Apocalypse: Climate, Democracy, and Other Last Chances](#)

Author: Catherine Keller

Publisher: Orbis

Publication Date: April 2021

Drawing on John's prophetic Apocalypse, theologian Catherine Keller unveils a "dreamreading" of our current global crisis—particularly the threat of climate change and ecological devastation. She shows that John's gospel is not a foretelling of future events, but a parable of our present reality, which exposes the deep spiritual roots of these threats.



[No Matter What: Crisis and the Spirit of Planetary Possibility.](#)

Author: Catherine Keller

Publisher: Fordham University Press

Publication Date: **December 2024**

A collection of essays that outline the recent work on ecology, political theology, religion, and philosophy. As we face relentless ecological destruction spiraling around a planet of unconstrained capitalism and democratic failure, what matters most? How do we get our bearings and direct our priorities in such a terrestrial scenario? Species, race, sex, politics, and economics will increasingly come tangled in the catastrophic trajectory of climate change. With a sense of urgency and of possibility, Catherine Keller's *No Matter What* reflects multiple trajectories of planetary crisis.

Christmas Tips & Giving Ideas

This article is reproduced from the December [UM Creation Justice Movement monthly tips](#).

The Wisdom of the Magi. The famous “three” were attuned to nature and saw in a star-studded sky the one that would guide them to travel—most likely bringing with them support folks, family, and friends—to One who was worthy of their efforts. They brought their gifts as an expression of worship. And they went home another way to keep the Precious One safe. May our journey to this Christmas be filled with such wisdom.

“God so loved the world...” Most often Christians hear John 3:16 in relationship to personal salvation. But **look again at what God loves** enough to send God’s own Son as a gift—the world! All of creation, not just humans. If God so loved the world, then we need to also. Choose at least one aspect of creation and love it through your gifts.

Change the usual pre-Christmas conversation of “What do you want for Christmas?” to a focus on “What do you need?” You may find hints or right-out requests for something that would be especially helpful or meaningful and that may

also be kind to the environment.

If a loved one says, “I don’t need anything for Christmas,” **choose a thoughtful gift that is zero-waste**, such as a shampoo bar, a package of wooden clothes pins to use instead of plastic “chip clips,” preserves from local farmers, some bamboo toilet paper, a bracelet made of plastic recovered from an ocean, a packet of seeds for wildflowers. Sustainable gifts spark lasting change.

If you don’t wish to receive presents, let that be known. Invite the gift givers to **shower you with their presence** instead. What can you do together that you would enjoy and create good memories and stories? Find opportunities for caring together for creation and working for justice.

Buying clothes for Christmas gifts, **read the labels**. Choose items made of natural fibers (organic cotton, linen, wool, silk, hemp, bamboo) or recycled fibers as a gift also to marine life. Fossil-fuel-based polyester, nylon, acrylic, spandex, lycra when washed release microplastics into water systems and then the food chain, harming sea creatures and ultimately humans.

Far away family and friends appreciate the gift you give through your cards and notes. **Stay in touch with friends and family with digital cards**. The cost is low, especially if your list is long, and the subscription covers a full year of reaching out to family and friends. The cost to the environment is also very low.

Focus on “enough” with holiday foods. Food waste that ends up in landfills becomes methane, which exacerbates climate change. Feast with gratitude and joy—and with the goal of little to no waste. Compost any scraps or leftovers as a gift to earth.

Have a conversation—not a confrontation—with your teen about any gifted money. Invite them to **think about investing in their future and Creation’s**. Help them explore possibilities related to their interests or concerns, such as organizations that care for wildlife, replant trees, support ocean clean up, or address justice issues. Ultimately, remember the money was a gift to them—not you. Your gift is to be a thinking partner.

Turn Christmas clean up into an educational and fun game for the children. Challenge them to **find the wrapping and packaging that can be reused** and what can be recycled. Shiny, glittery, metallic, and plastic in all forms are no-no’s for recycling, but could they be saved and reused? The game may be a gift that impacts choices they

make for years to come.

When disposing of a cut Christmas tree, **give your tree as a gift to Earth**. Some places will pick up the trees and grind them into wood chips for paths in parks or for mulch. Other people find that they can cut up a tree and bury the pieces, which allows the decaying tree to add nutrients to the soil. Don't burn the tree. That sends carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

This article is reproduced from the December [UM Creation Justice Movement monthly tips](#).

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