

NEWS

For Immediate Release

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Orange County Faith Leaders Support 'Creation Protection Agreement'

*Developed by the Orange County Interfaith Coalition for the Environment (OCICE),
Agreement Commits OC Faith Communities to Environmental Stewardship*

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif., June 26, 2008 — Leaders of more than 20 faith communities in Orange County representing a variety of faith traditions today pledged their support for the "[Creation Protection Agreement](#)," committing to having the health of the Earth play a more prominent role in their faith activities.

Developed by the Orange County Interfaith Coalition for the Environment (OCICE) to encourage faith communities to help society meet environmental challenges, the Creation Protection Agreement is being sent this week to more than 800 Orange County faith communities. The agreement was announced today at St. Mark Presbyterian Church in Newport Beach, known as "the greenest new church in America."

Representatives of the Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Commission for the Diocese of Orange County, the Islamic Shura Council of Southern California, Congregation Shir Ha Ma'a lot in Irvine, St. Paul's Episcopal Church and Aldersgate United Methodist Church both based in Tustin, Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange, The Buena Park Sikh Temple, and Unity: Spiritual Life Center in Laguna Hills are a few of the faith communities who are the first signatories to the agreement.

"The Creation Protection Agreement is designed to demonstrate that the faith communities of Orange County are united in bringing the environmental crisis under control," said Margaret Henke, OCICE co-chair. "We wish to thank the faith leaders who have signed the agreement and shown their commitment to meet the urgent challenges facing us all, and we hope many more will sign on in the weeks and months to come."

The agreement includes a list of acknowledgements describing why faith communities need to become environmental stewards and halt the dangerous destruction of planetary life. It also includes a list of resolutions to demonstrate their commitment, including incorporating sustainable practices in their own houses of worship, seeking environmental inspiration and instruction from their own faith traditions, and encouraging the faithful to seek sustainable and restorative solutions.

OCICE is providing tools to help meet these resolutions by directing faith communities to a resource site at www.ocice.org/creationcare. At the site, which will be continually updated, faith community leaders will find information and links on real-world environmental solutions such as “zero waste” recycling programs, as well as suggestions from various faith leaders on finding environmental inspiration and instruction from specific faith traditions.

“We believe that the Creation Protection Agreement is an important milestone in alerting all people of faith that we share a collective moral responsibility to leave a healthy planet for our children,” said Shakeel Syed, executive director of the Islamic Shura Council of Southern California. “We appreciate OCICE’s efforts and strongly encourage all faith leaders in Orange County to support the agreement.”

Representing a full range of religious traditions, the Orange County Interfaith Coalition for the Environment educates, raises awareness and empowers people to actively protect and preserve creation through responsible stewardship. For more information regarding OCICE, please visit www.ocice.org or call OCICE co-chairs Margaret Henke at (714) 731-6775 or Sherri Loveland at (714) 552-0333.

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