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Answering Earth's Call: An Interfaith Forum on Climate Justice

SEPTEMBER 21, 2015 BY JIM MILLER

By Jim Miller

Drawing inspiration from Pope Francis's encyclical, the San Diego Coalition to Preserve our Common Home (SDCPCH) is holding an [interfaith forum on climate justice](#) this

Thursday, September 24th at 7:00 PM at St. Paul's



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Cathedral.

The SDCPCH is comprised of people from many faith traditions as well as activists from local environmental, labor, and social justice organizations including the Interfaith Center for Worker Justice, SanDiego350, St. James and St. Leo Parish, the California Nurses Association, the Environmental Health Coalition, Foothills Methodist Church, the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council Environmental Caucus, the Cleveland National Forest Foundation, the Climate Action Campaign, Palomar Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Peace and Justice Ministry, the Christian Fellowship Congregational Church, the Islamic Center of San Diego, the San Diego County Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, the American Federation of Teachers Local 1931, and more.

We're presenting this forum in the face of increasing opposition to climate action on the part of those linked to fossil fuel interests. As Joe Romm recently pointed out in *Climate Progress*, Senate Majority leader Mitch McConnell and his allies now "apparently believe the role of the 'exceptional' and 'indispensable' nation is to actively work to undermine the world's best chance to save billions of people — including generations of Americans — from needless misery." This is, Romm rightly notes, extraordinary:

What's radical is the nakedly immoral and self-destructive greed underlying McConnell's strategy, which includes one of his aides "informing foreign embassies about GOP plans to oppose Obama's strategy on global warming."

Consider that the Pope's recent climate encyclical expounded at great length on the immorality of global climate inaction. So the immorality of intentionally trying to thwart the first truly serious effort aimed at global action is far beyond immoral.

Hence, while some of our leaders in Washington are engaging in a form of [suicidal politics](#) by campaigning against climate action at home and abroad at the same time many Democratic legislators in California have balked at taking climate action in

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oops! Not enough coffee? Thank you so much & it's fixed. (And I stole your comment verbatim...)



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EDITOR'S PICKS

the face of [pressure from big oil](#), we feel it is necessary to mark the Pope's visit to America by calling for a morally-centered politics that challenges us to fundamentally rethink our values.

As the SDCPCH mission statement notes:

Earth, our common home, is suffering because many of us are estranged from creation. We can no longer live as if we are separate isolated beings, ignoring our interdependence within the living system upon which we depend, and to which we are responsible. All of the world's religions and ethical systems recognize that we are part of creation – inextricably bound up with earth and one another. All of the world's religions call us to care for creation.

The stakes are high, and the future of the world's children and the diversity of all life depend on whether we can muster the courage to act in ways that challenge economic and political business as usual. Even as more and more of us recognize the clear scientific evidence of this threat to the natural world, including other species and human beings, it is not enough just to talk about it. This is a moral call to love in action. Those of us who believe in the possibility of a beautiful, just, and sustainable future, and who value our interdependence, must seek to match our creeds with our deeds.

We also accept Pope Francis's challenge to our "throwaway culture" and we have come to see that the climate crisis and our historic level of inequality are interrelated. Saving what we can of our common home requires a movement that unites economic and environmental justice and offers both a strong moral case for bold environmental action and a future that doesn't further deepen already historic levels of economic inequality where the interests of the affluent are protected while leaving the poor behind. This means abandoning market fundamentalism, awakening our moral imagination and reimagining a more equitable future before the drift toward ever-more destructive

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outcomes becomes inevitable.

We the undersigned recognize the great threat facing our planet due to climate change and resource depletion. We also recognize this great opportunity to awaken within humanity the sensibilities that will allow us to live from our deep interconnectedness with earth and all beings. We call upon all of our brothers and sisters to do all they can on a personal, institutional, political, and economic level to challenge themselves and others to answer the call to build a sustainable future.

We commit to change our personal behavior and ask our affiliated institutions, national and international leaders to:

- *Limit greenhouse gases and drastically reduce our carbon footprint by all means, including divesting from fossil fuels, investing in clean energy sources and making sustainable, humane food choices;*
- *Change our economic system from being solely profit driven to one that is more ethically sensitive to environmental protection and the equality of all nations and individuals;*
- *Take concrete measures to lower over-production and over-consumption that is exhausting the non-replaceable natural resources;*
- *Restrict and control chemical run-offs and pollution that contaminate our rivers, oceans, soil and air supply; and*
- *Raise awareness that we are one world family, sharing the limited resources of our common home striving to live together with dignity and in peace.*

Please come and join this important discussion.

When: Thursday, September 24, 2015. Doors open 6:30 pm; forum begins at 7 pm.

Where: 2728 Sixth Avenue, San Diego 92103 – in the Great Hall, enter on 5th Avenue between Olive and Nutmeg Streets

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Confirmed Speakers

- Welcome by the [Very Reverend Penny Bridges](#), St. Paul's Cathedral
- Rabbi Shai Cherry, Interfaith Center for Worker Justice
- [Rabbi Laurie Coskey](#), Interfaith Center for Worker Justice, MC
- Nana Firman, Muslim Coordinator, Our Voices and Fellow, GreenFaith
- Opening invocation by [Rev. Jeanette Ham](#), Foothills United Methodist Church
- [Rev. J. Lee Hill, Jr.](#), Christian Fellowship Congregational Church and Co-President, Interfaith Center for Worker Justice
- [Rev. Dr. Beth Johnson](#), Palomar Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, and Co-President, Interfaith Center for Worker Justice
- Eddie Junsay, SanDiego350
- [Jim Miller](#), Political Action/Community Outreach VP AFT Local 1931 and Chair of the SD-Imperial Counties Labor Council Environmental Caucus
- Kent Peters, San Diego Catholic Diocese
- [Karma Lekshe Tsomo](#), Professor of Theology & Religious Studies, Specialist in Buddhist Studies, University of San Diego

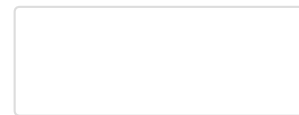
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Jim Miller

Jim Miller, a professor at San Diego City College, is the co-author of *Under the Perfect Sun: The San Diego Tourists Never See and Better to Reign in Hell*, and author of the novel *Drift*. His most recent novel on the San Diego free speech fights and the IWW, *Flash*, is on AK Press.



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