

Eastern Shore Faith Groups Organizing for Environmental Action

For the third time in as many years, several faith groups with strong commitments to the environment are organizing an all-day workshop on Maryland's Eastern Shore. The interfaith event will be held on Monday, October 14 (a holiday for some people) at Camp Wright, an Episcopal camp near Stevensville, MD, within sight of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge.

The workshops have been organized by Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake (<http://www.chesapeakecovenant.org/>), the Episcopal Diocese of Easton (<http://dioceseofeaston.org>), the Chester Valley Ministers' Association, and the Unitarian-Universalists of the Chester River. This year the organizing group also includes a representative of the Maryland & Greater Washington chapter of Interfaith Power and Light (<http://gwipl.org>). It is expected that this year's event will attract up to 100 people from both sides of the Bay, spanning a wide spectrum of beliefs.

The afternoon program for the event is quite practical, with presentations from IPL, IPC, Audubon Society staff, and — taking advantage of Camp Wright's setting — outdoor demonstrations by a local river keeper, a forester, and master gardener. The morning program will feature several speakers that will explore how the Judeo-Christian concept of Sabbath speaks to stewardship of the Earth and appreciation of nature. It also will include a reflection on these ideas from a local Native American chief. The title for the event is "Faith and Environment: Learning What We Can from the Concepts of Sabbath".



Most people understand "Sabbath" to mean a day of rest and worship, but the concept is actually much more complex, and in the Judeo-Christian tradition is inextricably connected to the Bible's account of creation. The Rev. G. Allen LaMontagne, rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church near Chestertown, MD, and an invited speaker, says, "The creation story is the basis for much eco-friendly work. We interpret from it that to 'have dominion' over creation means human beings are to be caretakers, not selfish tyrants...Sabbath is God's intimate care of the Earth and we are invited into that care." Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin, another of the invited speakers, believes that a proper appreciation of the Sabbath concept "could be a foundation stone of the faith community's message around environmentalism — the understanding of work for the sake of the well-being of all creation, balanced with rest, to remember that we are not in charge, but also beneficiaries as well as stewards of a healthy, sacred earth."

More information and pre-registration can be found at <http://www.interfaithchesapeake.org/fae>. An at-the-door contribution of \$10 will cover lunch. Everyone, regardless of religious affiliation (or none), who is interested in working in community to preserve our natural resources and protect the Earth, is invited to attend.