Interfaith Earthcare Touchstones

Beverly G. Ward

“A touchstone transcends any one religion, thought, or spiritual tradition and serves as a guide. These touchstones provide examples of specific prayers, passages or scripture, or inspirations from various sacred texts or philosophical writings associated with diverse traditions.” Last year I joined faith leaders at an interfaith Peace Breakfast hosted by Valencia College’s Peace and Justice Institute. We were each asked to share a touchstone from our faith traditions on how humans are accountable to the care and protection of our home, planet Earth. I’ve shared these touchstones below. – Beverly Ward, Field Secretary for Earthcare, Southeastern Yearly Meeting

**Buddhism, shared by Ruth Geniac**
“Peace is the art of etiquette; talking softly is the mark of civilization; smiling is the sunshine of relationships; trust is the friend of success. This is the protocol for modern people.” —Venerable Master Hsing Yun

**Christianity, shared by Father Frank Cooney**
“Thus the heavens and the earth and all their array were completed. On the seventh day God completed the work he had been doing; he rested on the seventh day from all the work he had undertaken. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work he had done in creation.” —Genesis: Chaper 2, verses 1-3

**Islam, shared by Imam Tariq Rasheed**
“It is God who has made for you the earth as a resting place, and the sky as a canopy, and has given you shape and made your shoes beautiful and has provided for sustenance.” —Qur’an 40:64

**Judaism, shared by Rabbi Joshua Neely**
“When the Blessed Holy One created the first human, God took Adam and Eve round all the trees of the Garden of Eden and said, ‘Look at My works, how beautiful and glorious they are! All that I have created, it was for you that I created it. Take the heart that you do not despoil and destroy My world: if you despoil it, there is no one to repair it after you.”—Koehler Rabiah, 7:13
Oglala Lakota, shared by Geronimo Redfeather (Cherokee First Nation)
“Some day the earth will weep, she will beg for her life, she will cry with tears of blood. You will make a choice, if you will help her or let her die, and when she dies, you too will die.” —John Hollow Horn

Humanism, shared by David and Jocelyn Williamson
“As humanists, it is crucial that we recognize that the responsibility to create and maintain sustainable methods of living is a collective one. As humanists, we acknowledge the damage done to our environment has been caused by human action and constitutes an existential threat to humanity and many other species that have not already been wiped out. As humanists, we understand that only humans can save ourselves from the climate crises we have created.” —American Humanist Association

Paganism, shared by Paula Despang
“The earth does not belong to man, man belongs to the earth. All things are connected like the blood that unites one family. Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself. The earth is sacred and man and animals are but one part of it. Treat the earth with respect so that it lasts for centuries to come and is a place of wonder and beauty for our children.” —Chief Seattle

Quakerism, shared by Beverly G. Ward
“...Daily, we become more aware of the suffering of the planet and its people. We find an increasing call to do justice, to ‘let our lives speak’, individually and corporately. We are led, as Friends have been at other daunting moments in history, to overcome our own despair, to relieve suffering, and to unite with Spirit in ways never before imagined to bring new possibilities to Life. Living in Blessed Community in peace with each other and the natural world takes more than words, it requires action.” —Southeastern Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, 2019 Fourth Month