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The Global Climate Justice movement has an unlikely new face: sixteen-year-old Greta Thunberg, a Swedish teenager. Thunberg recently completed a European rail tour to raise awareness on climate justice issues. I want to share her profile with you from a New Yorker piece by journalist [Masha Gessen](#):

Greta Thunberg developed her special interest in climate change when she was nine years old and in the third grade. "They were always talking about how we should turn off lights, save water, not throw out food. I asked why and they explained about climate change. And I thought this was very strange. If humans could really change the climate, everyone would be talking about it and people wouldn't be talking about anything else. But this wasn't happening."

She began researching climate change and has stayed on the topic for six years. She has stopped eating meat and buying anything that is not absolutely necessary. In 2015, she stopped flying on airplanes, and a year later, her mother followed suit, giving up an international performing career. The family has installed solar batteries and has started growing their own vegetables on an allotment outside the city. Thunberg and her family [mainly ride bikes]... the family has an electric car that they use only when necessary.

Thunberg also has been diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome. She says that her autism gives her special sensitivity to be attuned to the world's problems in a way that people who aren't on the spectrum are not. She claims people with autism are actually more appropriately responding to crises like climate change.

Greta is leading a global youth strike, where she invites students around the globe to join her every Friday lobbying and protesting instead of going to school. What Greta says she wants more than anything is for adults to act like adults, to act on the information we have



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about climate change, and to make the changes necessary in our daily lives and on the systemic level to turn climate change around.

Greta's call to action should be a wake-up call for us as well. From gun violence to climate justice, our youth are leading social justice movements around the globe with a sense of urgency we cannot ignore. The urgency of our youth is accentuated by the pain of multiple youth suicides which we must understand as connected. Youth need to see adults taking action to create a better future for them. For young people like Greta, it is a matter of life and death.

Here at Neighborhood, we are working together to slowly bring our facilities into closer alignment with our values. We are frustrated with how much money, time and energy it takes to correct old systems, and we are daunted by the number of changes that must be made. Greta's words call us to what she calls "cathedral thinking." What systemic actions are we taking and willing to take, for teens like Greta and for our children's future? What sacrifices are we willing to make—are we truly willing to sacrifice our convenience, comfort, and our resources for a better future for our earth? What do we value more, our earth's future or our immediate needs?

For us, our spiritual community centers us on not only the scientific but also the spiritual imperative to treasure the earth. We know that systemic change and profound spiritual change originate from people feeling truly connected to the earth, not set apart from it. Indigenous and Pagan spiritual traditions have this understanding deeply woven into the fabric of their everyday life. Engaged Buddhist and activist Joanna Macy calls this imperative the "greening of the self." As Unitarian Universalists, we join a burgeoning movement for creation-centered eco-spirituality, with grounding in our 7th principle.



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On this Earth Sunday, can we imagine this community as a laboratory for climate justice, a source of resilience, a place where we hold one another accountable for the small and large actions we can take? I now invite you to turn to your neighbor and share one small or large action you can take for climate justice. What support do you need to take that action?

I want to close with a responsive prayer:

Prayers of the People: U.N. Environmental Sabbath Service, Earth Day 1990

To bring new life to the land, to restore the waters, to refresh the air.

We join with the earth and with each other.

To renew the forests, to care for the plants, to protect the creatures.

We join with the earth and with each other.

To celebrate the seas, to rejoice in the sunlight, to sing the song of the stars.

We join with the earth and with each other.

To recall our destiny, to renew our spirits, to reinvigorate our bodies.

We join with the earth and with each other.

To recreate the human community, to promote justice and peace, to remember our children.

We join with the earth and with each other.

We join together as many and diverse expressions of one loving mystery: for the healing of the earth and the renewal of all life.

Amen