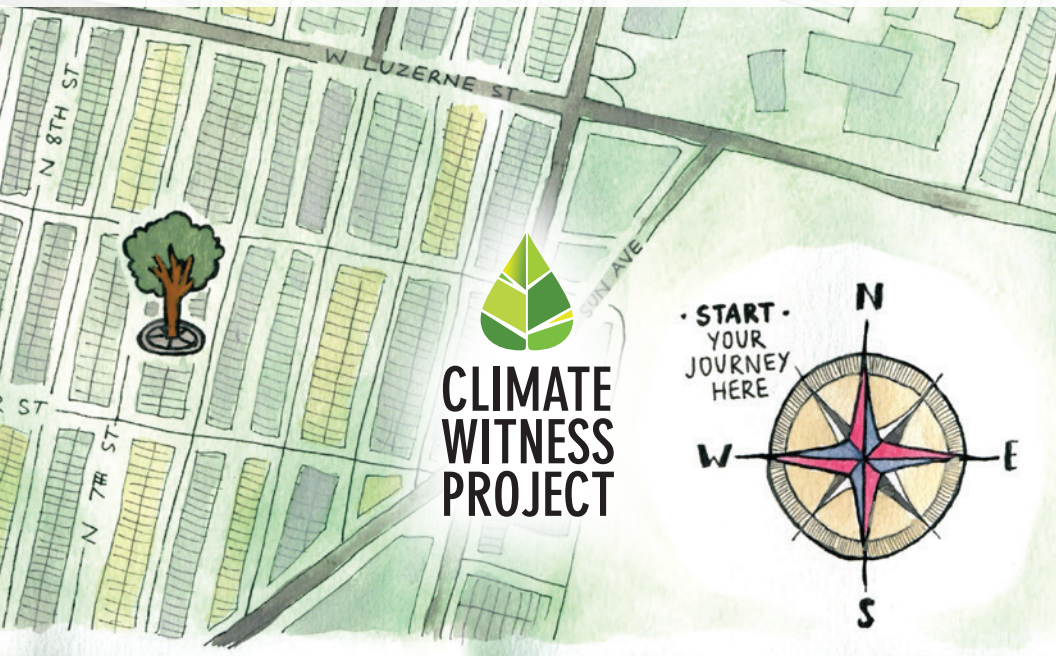


THIS IS HUNTING PARK

STUDY GUIDE




**CLIMATE
WITNESS
PROJECT**



The Climate Witness Project is designed to walk with congregations as they learn about the realities of climate change, as they seek to be better stewards of the resources they have been given, and as they find their voice to speak to their public officials about common-sense climate policy that will benefit the earth, people around the world who are poor and vulnerable, and future generations.

This video series features Hunting Park, a low-income community in Philadelphia, working to address climate change. In this video series, we look at what addressing climate injustice looks like practically. We learn from the stories of faith leaders, neighbors, and organizers working to address environmental harm. We explore lessons about trees, solar panels, and neighborhood activism to see how these experiences can translate into our own context. It is our hope that these actions inspire you for what is possible in your hometown.

This series includes six video sessions. After you watch an episode, use this study guide to dig into the issues talked about. Each session includes discussion questions to prompt further thought and meaningful dialogue.



CLIMATE
WITNESS
PROJECT

crcna.org/hunting-park

SUPPLIES NEEDED



A means to watch the video (computer, internet access, smartTV, video/projection, sound)

OPTIONAL



Notebook and pen to jot down additional thoughts while watching or discussing



Simple refreshments if desired

PROMO VIDEO LINK

Get your group excited about this study with this overview video:



youtu.be/t_nfA5dID2k

WORKSHOP OUTLINE

Follow these simple steps to facilitate your group's video discussions:

1. Set up the date and time for your group.
2. Watch a video together.
3. Come together and discuss thoughts and questions from the video, session topics, or issues raised. We encourage you to discuss your own questions about local issues. Discussion ideas and questions are also provided in this study guide.
4. Close by praying together for our environment, as well as for justice in the church and society as a whole.

NOTE FOR FACILITATORS

As you move through the study discussing action steps, consider including many resources that already exist to support you. You can find additional statistics, stories, and resources to deepen your discussion at the webpage crcna.org/hunting-park. You may want to review these supplemental materials in advance.

Tree Cover in Philadelphia. <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/8c767938f573494e8ec44a1ec4cf5c70>

DISCUSSION

- Some communities in Philadelphia have high tree-canopy cover while others do not. Why does this matter? How do you feel when you see stark environmental inequalities so clearly, such as with the Hunting Park tree canopy?
 - Consider the additional impact of increased energy bills. What are the collateral effects for residents?
- What are some meaningful ways in which churches might help? Tree planting might seem like an unlikely ministry venture. Yet trees and plants can make a huge improvement on quality of life.
- What surprised you in the video? What impact does this have on you?
- Does your community have a distinct lack of or abundance of trees? What about communities nearby? Do you think there are any urban heat islands in your area? Explain.
- How does spending time in creation affect your spiritual life? If you had more or less access to the outdoors, would it change your relationship with God? Explain.

ACTION

- What could greening look like in your community? There are tree-planting organizations and initiatives all over North America. Most municipalities have tree-planting programs operated by the city, private companies, or even nonprofits! We invite you to use a search engine to look up tree planting in your area and to see if you can add to your community's tree canopy or invest in a local community garden!
- How can you help reduce carbon emissions in order to prevent extreme heat from getting worse in vulnerable neighborhoods like Hunting Park? List any "easy" actions you can take immediately; then think about long-term changes you'd like to make to reduce your carbon footprint. Share your ideas with the group.

SESSION 2

Nobody Important Lives There

WATCH VIDEO



youtu.be/6WQ3atOv_7U

Did you know that Black and Latino Americans often live in areas that have higher pollution than other areas? In part this is because fossil-fuel companies often seek out the most inexpensive land in proximity to communities with little or no political influence in order to avoid pushback. While individual action is important, advocacy for systemic change is also needed. In this episode we see how residents of a low-income neighborhood band together to fight for their right to breathe clean air. That fight—the joining of hands across differences in generation, race, religion, and class—has led to small yet poignant victories in Hunting Park and nearby communities.



SEPTA Train. Photo by Chris Henry/Unsplash

DISCUSSION

- In the video Rev. Allen Drew asks, “Would you want this refinery in your neighborhood?” Did this video help you to see fossil-fuel-based power plants in a new way? Explain.
 - Community resident Lisa Hastings shares about the attitude she’d encountered: “As long as your problem is here and I’m there, what do I have to worry about?” How can we fight this natural tendency to care only about what affects us directly? How can our faith shape the way we address situations like this?
- Have you had experience in advocating for an issue or a cause? What was that experience like? If you haven’t participated in advocacy, is anything holding you back? What is something that you feel passionately about that you think needs to change at a systemic level?
- In the video for this session, USW representative John Buonopane talks about how existing infrastructure can be repurposed for geothermal energy, providing new jobs for people currently employed in the fossil-fuel industry. This type of change is called a “just transition,” which means pursuing clean energy in a way that provides training and work opportunities so that people are not left behind. What have you learned from this presentation? Did it help you see this issue in a more holistic way? Explain.

ACTION

- Your investment dollars make for a powerful advocacy tool for clean energy. Whether those dollars are in mutual funds or IRAs, by taking money out of fossil-fuel industry supporting companies and instead investing it in companies with a commitment to sustainability, you can make a tangible difference. To learn more about getting started in sustainable investing, check out the resources on the Hunting Park video series website.
- If advocacy is new to you, start by exploring our action center, which includes prewritten letters to representatives. It’s easy to add your contact information and thoughts to the form. Look at the website and discuss an action your group can take together.
- What surprises do you think you might find if you compared environmental and demographic indicators in your community? Delve into the virtual map that helps you do this in your own town using the additional resources on the Hunting Park webpage.



SESSION 3

A Sense of Pride

WATCH VIDEO



youtu.be/YRbbpHOOYwU

MooMoo, a long time resident of Hunting Park, provides glimpses of what life is like in the neighborhood. He's training for a career in solar installation with the Hunting Park Community Solar Initiative, an organization building partnerships to increase energy independence, provide low-cost solar job training, and create local jobs.



Graduating class from the Hunting Park Community Solar Initiative.

DISCUSSION

- The Hunting Park Community Solar Initiative provides solar-panel installation training and helps neighborhood homes become more energy efficient through upgrades and a low-cost solar installation program. Customers with these solar installations make lower monthly payments and pay it forward as payments are used to subsidize more solar panel installation throughout the community!
 - What did this video show about how clean energy, jobs, and lower monthly bills can be connected? In what ways has this video inspired you?
- Instead of destroying jobs, as naysayers often claim, clean energy creates new opportunities for business creation and job growth. The job training program that MooMoo participated in can lead to high-paying careers for graduates. Think of stories you have heard before about clean energy eliminating well-paying jobs. If you heard those stories again, how would you respond now?

ACTION

- The Hunting Park Community Solar Initiative was made possible by community partners, including the Climate Witness Project, local churches, a Christian vocational school, and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Environmental Education Grants program. If you were blue-sky dreaming, what kinds of partnerships for creation care might be possible in your community?
- What would make a good first step for your community to take in looking at energy-efficiency upgrades or solar installation? What would this look like in your home, business, or church? Where could you start to look for grants?
- Providing access to clean energy for people who couldn't otherwise afford it is an important way to combat environmental inequities. When the only community energy option comes from fossil-fuel-based power plants, it is hard to fight pollution. What barriers are present for equitable energy access? Find out what your city is doing to promote clean energy.

SESSION 4

We Are Called to Do This

WATCH VIDEO



youtu.be/LjwYjsl-Z5M

Love leads to action—the love of God leads us to love him and all of his creation (which includes our neighbors and ourselves). This can take the form of solar-panel installation, advocacy, preaching, or educating people around us. “Small steps actually make a big difference, and it can spread. Hopefully we can build momentum and bring others along with us,” says Rev. Laurence Tom.



Climate Witness Project partners meet with a legislator.

DISCUSSION

- Many Christians are familiar with Genesis 1:26, in which God gives humans “dominion” or “rulership” over creation, but if we look into the Hebrew text of that passage, we find the words *avad* and *shamar*. *Avad* means “to serve,” and *shamar* means “to fiercely protect from harm.” From the beginning, God’s call to us humans to care for creation includes service and passionate protection from harm. How does this shape your perspective about your church property, your personal property, and creation in general?
- Have you pondered the connection between climate anxiety and the hope of the gospel? How could you meet people at the point of their deepest concern about the good news of God redeeming all things? What do you think this can mean as we seek to care for people holistically?

ACTION

- In what ways do you see your church addressing care for creation? What other areas of creation care could your church incorporate into its services or gatherings?
 - The Climate Witness Project has free worship resources to help your church celebrate our Creator God and to highlight our role as stewards of creation. Prayers, liturgies, songs, and more can be accessed through the Hunting Park website.
- In what ways could you make your church building more energy efficient? There are lots of free energy audits that could help you explore how to save on your power bill—for example, by simply switching out lightbulbs. (What a win-win!) Dreaming bigger . . . are there grants for solar-energy installation? Water-permeable parking lots? What inspires you when you think about your building?
- Discuss starting a church-based creation care team to continue your actions begun here. We’re available to help with tools and resources, and you can check out our fun recipe at the Hunting Park website for starting a creation care team.

SESSION 5

Anything Can Be Done

WATCH VIDEO



youtu.be/mq1lGm5-mDs

In God's sovereign plan, we have been given the task of creation stewardship. Sometimes this means taking personal action. At other times, this means getting involved in advocacy on behalf of policies promoting care for the earth *and* for society's well-being. We do this because we love God, and out of that love, we seek to obey. Advocacy flows naturally from the responsibility of stewardship, because in our society, advocacy is how you help to make important, effective change. "If the policymakers don't know what a community needs or wants, then there's nothing. That's the core of advocacy—getting actual needs met by our policymakers," says Cheyenne Flores, Philadelphia Office of Sustainability.



Climate Witness Project partners across North America regularly write and meet with legislators.

DISCUSSION

- The relationship between relief, development, and advocacy found in Rev. Allen Drew's story of a factory pouring poison into water is a poignant one. In what areas does your church do the good work of "rushing to the aid of those who have been poisoned." and where could you "address the factory poisoning the water"?
- Has advocacy been a part of your spiritual walk? Has this video helped you think differently about how advocacy can be a part of loving your neighbor as Jesus calls us to in Matthew 22:37-40? Explain.
- Christian climate scientist Katherine Hayhoe recommends talking about climate change with sensitivity as a significant way to start personal advocacy: "Love starts with speaking truth, with making people fully aware of the risks and the choices that they face in a manner that is relevant and practical to them. But love also offers compassion and understanding and acceptance. . . ." What is intimidating about talking about climate change? How could you support each other in discussing climate more?
- For further ideas on effective climate change conversation topics, listen to Dr. Hayhoe's full talk on her book *Saving Us*, linked to on the Hunting Park website.
- While watching this video series, what has impressed or affected you the most about the work being done in Hunting Park? What has most inspired you toward action in your own town? In what ways has discussing climate change through this video series equipped you to speak in new ways about this topic?

ACTION

- In light of the videos and thinking about advocacy, what are some issues that you're passionate about in your community, state, and/or country that you could advocate for?
- Don't worry—this doesn't have to be an intimidating process. Check out the online *Faith in Action* workshop via the Hunting Park website for a step-by-step guide to choosing an advocacy topic and developing an advocacy message. Contacting elected officials may seem daunting at first, but sharing your well-informed opinion can make a real difference on the issues that you care about.

BONUS VIDEO

This Is Our Orchard

WATCH VIDEO



youtu.be/AZt_Pcm207U

Travel the Hunting Park Community Garden with your guide, Mike Wilcox. Not only does the garden provide green space, but it also gives people access to healthy food without shipping costs. We would love to see pictures and hear stories of the green spaces in your community. Share them with us anytime at cwp@crcna.org.



Many Climate Witness Project churches have turned unused lawns into meaningful community spaces.

Thank You

- Thank you to each individual who gave of their time and expertise to be interviewed for this project.
- Special thanks to the production team:
 - Nathan Roels, Second Mile Production
 - Sarah Drew (narration)
 - Noah Praamsma (camera crew)
 - Riley Erlandson (art)
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 - The City of Philadelphia
 - Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Environmental Education Grants
 - Chinese Christian Church and Center
 - Eighth Street Community Church
 - The Esperanza Tree Tenders
 - The Home Energy Efficiency Team
 - Hunting Park Community Garden
 - Hunting Park Community Solar Initiative
 - One Hope Community Church
 - Spirit and Truth Fellowship
 - Tree Philly
 - TCRC Community Healing Center
 - Vocatio Career Prep High School
 - 350 Philly



“ *Anyone can take two seconds, say that they care about climate, become a CWP partner, and leave it at that. I think the push should be to show that there is A LOT to do—that it’s exciting, that it is a human and local issue, that CWP is doing it, and that we need people to join us with both their money and their labor.”*

—Rev. Allen Drew, CWP Eastern U.S. Regional Organizer

“ Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

—Galatians 6:2 (NRSV)



Join the Climate Witness Project

crcna.org/climate-witness-project

