

## **Project 5: Adult Education Class on Biblical Roots for Climate Change Activism**

Project Description: Close reading of Biblical passages as they guide political action

While the first four projects were not expected to be single events that would be completed within a predictable time frame, this project had a definite schedule. The project is one of a long series of adult learning opportunities at Old Ship; these serve our community by encouraging spiritual growth and the free and responsible search for truth and meaning in harmony with Unitarian Universalist principles and sources of inspiration. In addition to seeking to fulfill this mission, along the way we hope to foster new friendships, good conversations, and stronger bonds of community. All of these strengthen our capacity for engaging in the kinds of activity described in the first four projects.

A class, "Bible and Earth Care," explored selected passages and stories from both the Hebrew scriptures and the Christian New Testament that offer guidance for stewardship and care of the earth, including the call to care for populations who are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change and other environmental crises. The class of ten participants met for 90-minute sessions on three consecutive Wednesdays. The sermon, "How Forgiving Is the Earth?" (September 16, 2018), prepared for the class. Readings were as follows:

- September 19, 2018 -- two creation stories (Genesis chapters 1-3), the story of Noah and the flood (Genesis chapters 6.9 - 9.17), and the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17);
- September 26, 2018 -- Job chapters 38-42; Psalms 147 and 148; Hosea chapter 14; and Amos chapter 5;
- October 3, 2018 -- Matthew 6:24-34, 14:14-21. 25:34-40 and Luke 6:20-49.

As is customary with all of the adult education classes, participants paid close attention to each of the readings and then related them to contemporary issues: the place of human beings in the Creation combining dominance with stewardship; the particular challenges of utilizing the environment while exercising stewardship over it; Biblical tests of that stewardship (e.g., by flood, by Job's various sufferings, by challenges and rewards in the Beatitudes) and their counterparts in contemporary life (e.g. environmental crises, scientific and geopolitical elements of denying / combatting climate change), and love for one's enemies (corresponding to the importance of understanding what prompts people to deny / combat climate change); the value of building one's house upon a solid foundation (sound science, caring faith) and of agreeing upon what makes that foundation "solid."

Timeline for Completion: September 19 – October 3, 2018

Lead: Ken Read-Brown, Minister