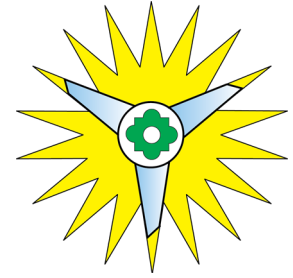


# NORTH CAROLINA INTERFAITH POWER & LIGHT'S EARTH SABBATH CELEBRATIONS



## Reflections from Earth Sabbath Celebration Participants on What Earth Sabbath Celebrations Mean to Them and Why They Attend

I attend North Carolina Interfaith Power and Light Earth Sabbaths because it gives me an opportunity to gather in community and share thoughts and prayer with people from many faith traditions, all of whom care about the human-Earth relationship. It is a time when new ideas and care of creation activities of faith communities are shared. These gatherings inspire me to continue working to help people see God by seeing His/Her presence reflected by the mirror of creation.

During a recent Earth Sabbath celebration, the facilitators helped participants connect to creation through the use of their cherished symbols rooted in nature, collected over their lifetimes. In a First Nations Sage Ceremony, there was a sacredness in the moment that bridged the past and present, right there on the corner of Dixie Trail and Wade Avenue. It reminded me that all beings, the Creator, and the planet are one if we choose to see.

-Larry Petrovick, Raleigh

*"Living on Earth today is complicated, fearful and chaotic with problems so huge it's easy to get weighed down [. . .] This is why I attend the Earth Sabbath Celebrations. I feel connected to the people who come, to nature that surrounds me, to joy, to community, and I leave with hope and gratitude-knowing I am not alone."*

- Linda Rodriguez



Altar at a winter Earth Sabbath Celebration in Raleigh

Resources to host your own Earth Sabbath Celebration can be found [online](#).

NCIPL offers a general framework, replicable services, and more.



Participants at a Summer Solstice Earth Sabbath Celebration

To me, an Earth Sabbath Celebration is an experience of relationship with fellow humans who seek to explore and live out the truth that the Earth, as Thomas Berry would say, is “not a commodity to be consumed, but a community to which we belong.”



I attend these celebrations to gain and to give encouragement for the shared vocation to care for the earth. It is a place where we may bring our diverse spiritual understandings to enrich our sense of connections between the earth and each other, which strengthens us for the difficult but joyful work of healing the planet.

-Ted Purcell, Durham

I ATTEND THE EARTH SABBATH CELEBRATIONS BECAUSE IT IS A PRACTICE.

- A SACRED OCCASION TO REMEMBER IN THE DISTRACTIONS OF OUR CULTURE'S EXCESSES WHAT REALLY MATTERS & THE FOUNDATION OF WHAT I VALUE
- A PLACE TO CONNECT & SHARE STORIES WITH OTHERS ABOUT OUR INTERCONNECTIVITY
- A RITUAL THAT MAY FURTHER FOCUS & GALVANIZE MY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WORK OF THE GREAT TURNING THAT JOANNA MACY HAS FRAMED SO POWERFULLY.



TO ME, AN EARTH SABBATH CELEBRATION HONORS THE ELEMENTS & ALL OF THE LIFE THAT INHABITS  OUR BLUE BOAT HOME. IT ALSO IS A PLACE TO FACE & FEEL WHAT IS CURRENTLY BEING LOST... A TIME OF  SOLITARY REFLECTION & COMMUNITY SHARING.

IN GRATITUDE,  
CHAS. JENSEN

Living on Earth today is complicated, fearful and chaotic with problems so huge it's easy to get weighed down by the immensity of the problems we need to deal with, especially with the issues around climate change. To me, an Earth Sabbath Celebration is a welcome relief to be among people who recognize the anxiety we all feel and understand the need to be in a safe place where we can express our pain for the world. Joanna Macy writes that "when we hear the sounds of the earth crying within us, we're unblocking the channels of felt connectedness that join us to the world. These channels act like a system, opening us up to a source of strength and resilience". This is why I attend the Earth Sabbath Celebrations....I feel connected....to the people who come, to nature that surrounds me, to joy, to community, and I leave with hope and gratitude- knowing I am not alone.

-Linda Rodriguez, Raleigh

I appreciate and attend them first of all because they're fun. It's heartwarming to join a diverse group of people from many faith traditions to celebrate, learn, appreciate, and support each other as we give voice to issues that are basic to us all. It's also intriguing to go each month not knowing exactly what a leader from a different tradition may bring to us and/or have us do. I've shared several new experiences with people I already knew or didn't know at all and have added a few fond memories to my store of good things to recall.

Marianne Newman, Asheville

*To me, an Earth Sabbath Celebration is special. I attend because it has become a very important part of my spiritual connection. We have been meeting on the fourth Tuesday of each month for two years at Community United Church of Christ in Raleigh, so we have a lot of regulars that I look forward to seeing each month. I have only missed one Earth Sabbath when I spoke at a public hearing against fracking.*

*At Earth Sabbath Celebrations we have the opportunity to share our joys and concerns and release our anger and sadness from things that are affecting the environment in NC and around the world. I love the energy Steve and other facilitators bring to the Earth Sabbath. We sing, read, watch and discuss videos, do tai chi around the fire, and celebrate the seasons and elements. We have time for meditation, prayer, and grounding. As an advocate for the Earth, it gives me great joy to spend time with like-minded people who care for creation and have a passion for protecting the Earth like I do. Please join us and spread the word!!*

*Peace and love for our beautiful Earth,  
Karen Bearden, Raleigh*



One Earth Sabbath Celebration focused on Migrating Birds, shown above. Photo from Ian Sharp, wiki commons.

*To me, an Earth Sabbath Celebration is a time for people who love the earth and feel concerned, frightened, passionate about what humans and the Industrial Growth Society are doing to destroy all life, to get together in a service of worship expressing gratitude for what the earth gives us, honoring our pain, and supporting and encouraging each other in our on-going efforts to live more simply, and work to use our gifts to contribute to the Great Turning.*

*I attend these Earth Sabbath (and sometimes help to lead them) because I need to be with other earth-lovers. I need encouragement and gentle pushes to keep growing. It is too easy to slip back into denial and Business as Usual, or to slip into despair and overwhelm, or to get burnt out in doing. I need a place to be real about this crucial issue.*