

National Faithlands Gathering Agenda 8/25-27

2021 National Faithlands Gathering

Day 1- Wednesday August 25th

(Concurrent with Food, Faith and Farms Conference)

For Full 8/25 Agenda please go to www.interfaithfood.org

Sessions Relevant to Faithlands

Opening Plenary

Leaders representing Christian, Jewish and Muslim traditions will describe the relationship between sustainability, justice, food and agriculture from their traditions. Speakers will describe diverse initiatives addressing food distribution; support of young faith-based farmers; and farmworker advocacy. Learn how these can facilitate religious practice and engage community members in new ways.

Speakers include: Rabbi Justin Goldstein, Yesod Farm; Bishop David Rice, Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin

2. Successful Farms and Gardens on Faith-Owned Lands

One of the most challenging hurdles for beginning and immigrant farmers is to secure land to grow food. Meanwhile, religious institutions own land throughout the United States that is suitable for agriculture. These plots of land may vary in size from a 1,000 square foot community garden to over 100 acres. Partnerships can allow faith groups to simultaneously: save resources, advance food security, and help farmers make a living for themselves. Presenters will describe innovative projects including: a farmer leasing from a Seventh Day Adventist middle school that successfully transferred ownership 3 times in Sonoma County, CA. You'll also hear from a farmer who leased from her church while developing a farm project who is now established to the point they qualified for a USDA loan for a piece of land, with a home and infrastructure.

Speakers include: Jose Camacho of Camacho Family Farm; Chantal Mullens, Seed2Seed/the Farm and Forge; Chris of CrossWinds Church (invited).

5 . Farming and Faith Fellowships for Young Adults

Young people experience life-changing growth when faith communities develop programs for young people to learn about agriculture within a faith-based community and context. Hear about fellowships programs that have allowed hundreds of young adults to deeply connect to soil, soul and religious practice.

Speakers include: Sara Tashker, Green Gulch Farm/San Francisco Zen Center; and Nurya Love-Parish, Plainsong Farm; TBD, Urban Adamah.

9. Negotiating Leases of Faith Community Lands to Support Beginning and Immigrant Farmers

The 3rd of the Faithlands track break-out sessions will address principles and experiences of farmers and land managers partnering to have commercial production on land by religious groups. Learn about a faith-based school that leased to 3 different small-scale commercial farmers over a period of 8 years; and a Jewish farm and culinary camp that leased from an Adventist Boarding school for a summer camp. Learn about the unique perspectives and challenges that can arise when small farmers work with large institutional landowners.

Speakers include: Liya Swartzman, California FarmLink; Steven Vandevere, Redwood Adventist Academy; Casey Yarrow, Eden West; Kathy Ruhf, Land For Good.

Closing Plenary

Leaders with a national perspective will discuss how faith communities can support our brothers and sisters of all races and religions while building the sustainable food movement in 2021 and beyond! The first speaker will discuss advocacy efforts to make sure USDA nutrition assistance can better serve the needs of Muslims in need including refugees and asylees. Next we'll hear about the blessings that can unfold when land owned by a church is leased to a farmer to grow food to feed a community, and the budding national effort to grow more of these partnerships. The final panelist will address how faith-based groups can support BIPOC farmers, and the work nation-wide of Black Churches called to support both farmers and people in need of healthy food. A brief question and answer session will follow.

Speakers include: Sha'Von Terrell, Black Church Food Security Network; Ammar Ahmad, Islamic Circle of North America; Howard Allen, Faithful Farms.

Updated 8/13

Day 2- Thursday August 26th

Agenda with Panel Descriptions

9-10:00 am Welcome, intros, agenda check etc.

Name, organizational affiliation, role (farmer/gardener, advocate, or institutional land manager/decision-maker). In addition, participants would be invited to share 2-5 min about current project or goals related to Faithlands, and why they came.

10-a.m-12:30 - Updates from Faithlands Work Around U.S.

Introduction to Faithlands Projects and People

Faithlands Tool Kit: Briana Olsen, Agrarian Trust

The lead author for the FaithLands Toolkit, released earlier this Summer, will share highlights of successful Faithlands farms/gardens/projects and the people behind them. We'll discuss how this virtual 'document' can be used in the future. Farmers present at the gathering will briefly share real world experiences from their perspectives.

Strategies for Inventorying Faithlands: Steve Schwartz, Interfaith Food;
Emma Bilecky, Princeton Seminary and Churchlands.

The session will focus on how to find faithlands in your county that could be suitable for farmers and gardeners. We will discuss 3 different approaches by organizations in three parts of the country.

Break

Engaging institutions at a higher level to commit to faithlands work:

Rev. Nurya Love-Parish, Churchlands/Plainsong Farm

Discussion of pros and limitations of the 2018 National Episcopalian Resolution supporting Faithlands.

Land Manager's Perspective: Sue Holland, Coastside Lutheran Church, San Mateo;
Rev. Ambrose Carroll, Church by the Side of the Road; Green the Church

12:30 -1:30 Lunch

1:30 - 3:00 Perspectives from Faithlands Work Around U.S. (continued)

Challenges with Starting and Sustaining Faithlands Projects Farmers' Perspective

Four farmers with experience developing farming projects on faith community lands will discuss some of the challenges they encountered.

Finding the Farmers! Candace Thompson (Inv.); Kristina Villa, Agrarian Trust; Kathy Ruhf, Land for Good.

Introduction to secular networks of beginning and immigrant farmers. How do we work to ensure that a JEDI lens (Justice, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity) espoused by many faith groups is applied in practice with their land management practices. How can secular intermediaries serve as resources to help faith-based land managers 'seal the deal' with these farmers?

3:00 - 3:30

Beyond Short Term Farm Leases: Kendra Johnson, Agrarian Trust; Rev. Pamela Doland, St. Martin's Episcopal Church, Davis.

When the religious institution is ready to offer long-term tenure what are some options? We will discuss long-term leases and leases that allow accumulation of equity. What are options for on-site housing? How can a religious group work with a land trust to include sale of a conservation easement as part of a fee title sale. When a congregation plans for a bequest how can they incorporate considerations of climate, indigenous people's rights and appropriate scale of a viable farm.

Networking/socializing break.

20-30 min.

4:15 Simultaneous Sessions:

1. Discussion about coordination of Faithlands work in future. Topics expected to include: structure of leadership team, future gatherings, potential fundraising etc.
2. Discussion, sharing and problem-solving among farmers and gardeners about practical issues they have faced on faith lands projects, and concrete lessons and resources that can be shared.

5:30 Next Steps: Closing thoughts on the gathering and what needs to happen to keep this work moving in a positive, productive direction.

6:00 Reception, meal and networking

7:30 Return to Urban Adamah lodging

Day 3- Friday August 27th

Successful Farms and Gardens on Faithlands

Gather Urban Adamah 8:30

Depart 8:45 a.m.

Site 1: Zaytuna College Permaculture Farm, on the northern edge of the UC Berkeley campus, near the grouping of seminaries known as Holy Hill Zaytuna College's permaculture project includes edible landscaping and incorporates designs from traditional Islamic art.

Depart approx. 9:45

Site 2: Fertile Grounds project at Asbury United Methodist Church, Livermore.

A dynamic independent non-profit leases 2 ½ acres from this suburban church. Food is produced, then distributed to pantries, a food bank and other outlets. The project includes a u-harvest program, and provides training and education. An independent 501 c 3 non-profit Fertile Grounds leases the property at considerably below market rate. Recently, investment in an expensive well was shared by the church and Fertile Grounds and benefits both entities. The church no longer buys water from the City of Livermore resulting in considerable savings.

Depart approx. 11:20

Site 3. CrossWinds Church, Livermore

Built on a 33 acre old dairy farm, CrossWinds Church led by Pastor Chris Coli hosts a long-time garden that is worked communally by volunteers. The food is distributed to low-income people through a local pantry, and to those living on site. This year the site has become host to Goodness Village a tiny-home village developed by a separate entity partnering with CrossWinds Church. Church leaders are considering options to expand use of some of the property to grow food on a larger scale. The site is an oasis near a highway, a golf course and a mall. **Lunch stop!**

Depart approx. 12:20

Return Urban Adamah, Berkeley 1 p.m.