

My request is that either the Sunday before or after Earth Day, pastors should preach about climate change or environmental issues in their town or region.

Our state is a very beautiful state with the Blue Ridge Mountains in the west, the Chesapeake Bay in the east, and all the natural wonders in between. However, these wonders are suffering. The Mountain Valley Pipeline is being built in the Roanoke area, destroying the beauty of the mountains, and possibly endangering the lives of many plants, animals, and humans as well. The dead zones in the Chesapeake Bay are expanding more each year as farmers and homeowners use excess amounts of fertilizers for crops and yards. The bay is not only a habitat for many kinds of fish and mollusks, but we use the bay for recreational and economic reasons as well. There are also issues of environmental injustice all over the state like the compressor station in Union Hill. However, these only scratch the surface of environmental issues in Virginia, here are three useful links that I have found for environmental issues in Virginia: [Alarming Environmental Issues Faced by Locals | Virginia Wildlife Protection \(vawp.org\)](#), <https://www.epa.gov/va>, and [Threats and Issues in Virginia // LandScope America](#).

As a Christian and a religious studies major, I tend to see a different side of environmentalism than many environmentalists see it. Scientist will see an ecosystem as a community of both biotic and abiotic factors all interacting with each other. However, I also see the spirituality of nature and as God's creation. God created the universe and Earth in seven days as it is said in Genesis chapter 1. He created the sun, the moon, the dry land that we stand upon, the fruit and vegetables that we eat, the birds of the sky, the fish of the sea, and the animals on the land. Lastly, he created us humans out of dust from the ground and created us in his image. God told us that we humans have dominion over the land and animals. However, this part of the scripture is where I believe that we should not be conquerors of the Earth but share the Earth

with all the other organisms. These organisms are God's creation and our neighbors in the environment and Jesus Christ gave us two commandments; To love the Lord with all off your heart, mind, and strength and to love your neighbors as you love yourself.

I once again am requesting that pastors should preach either about climate change or local environmental issues to their congregation either the Sunday before or after Earth Day.

Thank you,

Bridget Shorey