



CLIMATE RESILIENCE COHORT

October 2023 - June 2024

*Do the wildfires keep you up at night and the realities of climate change break your heart?
Do you want something meaningful to do to secure a more healthy future for the
young people in your life? Do you long to feel less isolated as a leader or congregation
but aren't sure where or how to get started?*

Earlier this year, a broad coalition, led primarily by immigrants and young leaders of color who've been directly impacted by wildfires and climate emergencies, successfully passed legislation in Salem to fund **Community Resilience Hubs** across Oregon. Local community-based hubs will *"nourish existing relationships and trust in the community to help prepare for the impacts of climate change and other disruptions."*¹

We know that in times of crisis and disaster, faith communities are often one of the first places people turn to for relief and connection. And it's no surprise, as many of our congregations are already doing critical work caring for our communities day in and day out. *But what if we were even more intentional about building relationships and resilience before an emergency? How might we better equip ourselves, and the land and buildings we steward, to respond to the new challenges we face with more frequent and severe disasters? What might become possible if we did this work not in isolation, but in community with our neighbors, with the land, and with other teams and communities across the state?*

This fall, a new **Climate Resilience Cohort** will bring together teams of leaders from faith communities throughout the state to learn and practice with each other in the work of building more resilient communities.

Over the course of 9 months we will consider:

- *How can our faith communities help co-create and participate in local resilience networks and hubs? Who else in our communities is already engaged in this work? What can we learn from each other?*
- *What concrete things can we offer or do to contribute to the material, social, and spiritual resilience of our neighborhood? Our watershed?*
- *What is our faith community's most faithful next step in this work?*

¹ From Rogue Climate: <https://roguclimate.org/our-work/resilience-hubs/>

For some faith communities, this could look like:

- Partnering with a local immigrant-led community group to co-create a community warming and cooling shelter
- Readyng an existing food pantry to easily convert to a feeding center in a disaster
- Collaborating with neighbors to restore natural habitat in the watershed
- Installing solar panels and generators, and creating a community charging station
- Working with young people to create a ritual or space to process grief and anxiety related to climate change

While each team will discern how to engage in their own context, a core commitment of our Cohort overall will be tending to racial and economic equity: *Who is most impacted by disasters and climate change in our communities? How can we work together towards a community in which all can thrive?* In this, we are inspired by this definition from Pathways to Resilience:

Resilience is “bouncing forward to eradicate the inequities and unsustainable resource use at the heart of the climate crisis.”

Together we will discover and apply the basic principles and practices of grassroots community organizing as a way to address the impacts of climate injustice and build climate resilience. Our work will be on multiple planes:

- Local - stewarding our faith community’s land and resources towards community-wide resilience, working at the level of our local watersheds
- Systems change - advocating for policies in our governments and institutions that advance climate justice
- Culture shift - nurturing ways of being that support collective resilience and well-being, for people and our planet

Together we will move from despair, apathy and isolation, to courage in community and collective action.

What is the commitment?

- **Come as a team.** Register at least 3 (and up to 7) members of your congregation or community to participate together as a “Core Team.”
- **Two gatherings a month.**
 - Core Teams from across the state will meet as a full Cohort via Zoom the third Tuesday of each month from 6:30–8:00pm from October through June (10/17, 11/21, 12/19, 1/16, 2/20, 3/19, 4/16, 5/21, 6/18)
 - One gathering a month (in-person or online) with just your Core Team
 - We also anticipate additional (optional) opportunities to gather and act together in person, at various places and points throughout the 9 months.

- **Contribute to sustainability.** We invite participants to make a meaningful financial contribution towards covering the costs of the Cohort. Suggested contribution is \$100 per individual participant, with a sliding scale.

Our Cohort Design Team will provide:

- **Community, Connection, & Content.** Monthly Cohort Gatherings will offer:
 - space for mutual connection and learning with other Core Teams
 - opportunities to hear from community leaders (especially youth, leaders of color, and voices from the margins) actively engaged in efforts to build climate resilience and address underlying inequities
 - light-touch teachings on organizing practices and processes you can engage with your Core Team in your local context
- **Suggested Agendas** for your monthly Core Team meetings and **Action Opportunities** in support of disaster and climate justice work statewide.
- **Accompaniment.** Each Core Team will be matched with a Companion who will meet with and walk alongside your team as you translate and practice what you are learning through the Cohort into your own local context.

Next Steps:

1. **Register:** [Fill out this form](#). We know many of you are still in the process of building your team. As you confirm participants, please forward this link and have each person fill out the registration form. This will help us streamline communications and plan.
2. **Form Your Team:** As you pull together your team to engage in this work (at least three people from each community) consider who could serve as host or co-host. This point person (or people) will take responsibility to convene your team as needed, coordinate with your Companion, and communicate with the Cohort Design Team.

Interested, but have more questions? Join us for one of three virtual info sessions:

- [Thursday, August 31st from 6-7pm](#)
- [Monday, September 11th from noon-1pm](#)
- [Thursday, September 28th from noon-1pm](#)

And/or reach out to Sarah K. Loose, Director of Disaster & Climate Resilience, Oregon Synod:
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