

Love Is God's Renewable Energy

“You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?” — Luke 12:56

May the words of our mouths, the meditations of our hearts, and the actions of our hands caring for creation demonstrate our love for you, God, and for our neighbors.

Why don't we know how to interpret the present time?
That closing question in today's Gospel has been ringing in my mind.

Jesus challenges us to read the signs of the present time like the weather — a red sky means change is coming. Today, our “red sky at morning” is the heat dome, the wildfire smoke, the disappearing glaciers. The Gospel is speaking not just to some historical past but to our present day. And it's speaking not just about climate but about how we've lost sight of what's important.

What are we missing, and what can we do about it?

The Gospel makes clear that it's not about me first or family first or America first. It's about God first and letting everything flow from there.

God is warning us of the consequences of putting ourselves above our love for God and neighbor. We see this in many ways — collectively, in allowing the richest country in the world to deny basic human rights to the least fortunate; and personally, in choices that warm the planet: burning fossil fuels for our cars, electricity, heating, cooking, and creating mountains of plastic waste.

Our love for comfort and convenience has overheated God's creation. We now face stronger storms, harsher droughts, and growing human suffering. In doing the research for the book “Solve Climate Change Now,” I also learned that the average North American consumes at a level that would require the resources of 4.7 planets if everyone lived like we do. We need to repent of ways that deplete both the earth and our souls.

The good news of Jesus' ministry is that love is the answer — loving God, not lifestyles and possessions, with all our heart, mind, and soul, and our neighbors as ourselves.

So how can we apply Jesus' Great Commandment to climate change? How can we harness the power of love? What can we do? Will it make a difference? And who can help us?

My “a-ha” moment about climate change — my love story for a healthy climate — came six years ago. My wife Liz, daughter Kate, and I were visiting Iceland, a place where creation's majesty is on full display. We went to a glacier, and Kate and I explored an ice cave.

It was dazzling — brilliant light filtering through ancient ice — but it carried a message of doom. You see an ice cave forms when meltwater cuts through the glacier like a saw. Once melting starts, the glacier's decline accelerates. That year alone, it receded 45 feet. Elsewhere, Icelanders were holding funerals for glaciers that had completely disappeared.

Hugging our daughter in that ice cave, I knew the renewable energy of my love for her — and for all future generations — had to power my actions.

But what could I do? That moment has fueled my work to mobilize people worldwide for climate awareness, action, and advocacy.

I've learned that fear — while understandable — will not sustain climate solutions. Fear is like a quick battery: it gives us a jolt but runs down fast. Indeed, the most frequently repeated phrase in the Bible is “fear not.” Jesus and all great spiritual teachers know that fear won't bring forth our best. Instead, love is God's renewable energy — the kind that recharges itself and never runs out.

Climate change is a complex, chronic challenge. We've been adding greenhouse gases to the atmosphere for hundreds of years, and the 1.5 trillion tons now up

there will linger for centuries. This is not a problem to swat at — it's a calling to embrace with sustained, loving action.

In a moment, I'm going to ask you to pair up with a person near you and share your love story for creation. Who or what's important to you that motivates you for a healthy climate? First, one of you will share for 60 seconds what you love about God's creation and why it matters to you. Then switch. I'll tap the bell to signal when to change roles, and I'll tap it twice to come back together.

[sharing happens — ask 2–3 people to share with the group]

Now — how can you put your love story into action?

Theologian Frederick Buechner said, “The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.” That's your climate sweet spot.

We have examples here in our congregation:

We reused a World War II chapel from Camp Roberts rather than let the beautiful clear-heart redwood in this church go to landfill.

Our hospitality team uses reusable cups and dishes, cutting waste.

We've planted trees with ECOSLO and the Los Osos Valley Garden Club to store carbon in the soil.

The Vestry installed solar panels and on-demand hot water.

Our Earthcare Team joined the Beyond Plastic Ecochallenge, learning and acting together to reduce polluting plastics made from fossil fuels.

The good news: we have power to change. Forty-two percent of all U.S. greenhouse gas emissions come from decisions we make at home — what cars we drive, how we heat and cool our homes, what we eat, how we power our appliances.

Small changes add up. For example, if everyone in the U.S. swapped one beef meal for a plant-based meal each week, we'd cut over 50 million tons of CO₂ emissions annually. If every driver skipped or carpooled just one 30-mile trip a month, we'd save 20 million tons.

And when we choose actions from a place of love, they enhance our lives. Carpooling becomes friendship time. A break for EV charging becomes a chance to read, call a friend, or pray.

Taking action personally also makes us far more effective advocates. Research shows that people who act themselves are 40% more persuasive in calling for policy change. As you share your love story for a healthy climate with family and friends, you multiply your impact.

So, how can you get started — or go deeper? This week's Benediction Weekly has an easy action: sign public comments opposing the EPA's rollback of clean energy standards. At Coffee Hour, we'll also have information on rebates, incentives, and ways to reduce your carbon footprint joyfully.

Now, more than ever, our world needs the renewable energy of our love — our love for creation, for neighbor, for God, who provides it all.

Closing charge:

Let's go out this week powered by God's renewable energy of love — to heal creation, love our neighbors, and live as if the future matters. Because it does.

Amen.

Don Maruska, sermon delivered 2025-08-17, St. Benedict's Episcopal Church, Los Osos, CA