

MISSION 4/1 EARTH:

50 Great Days

Campaign Manual

REV. SEPT. 25, 2012

ONE UNITED CHURCH on a shared resurrection witness for Planet Earth during 50 great days of greening up, powering down, and shouting out for the environment!

EASTER MONDAY

PENTECOST SUNDAY

April 1, 2013 – May 19, 2013

GOAL #1

1 MILLION HOURS

of engaged earth care, including clean up, advocacy, and education.

GOAL #2

100,000 TREES

planted locally and globally.

GOAL #3

100,000 LETTERS

of environmental advocacy written and sent to elected officials and media.



ucc.org/earth

God is still speaking,
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



REVISED 2/27/13

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This Mission 4/1 Earth Campaign Manual may be revised and new material added as we lead up to our launch date. Check back periodically for updated information, as well as new resources, at ucc.org/earth.



What is Mission 4/1 Earth?

ONE UNITED CHURCH on a shared resurrection witness for Planet Earth during 50 great days of greening up, powering down and shouting out for the environment! That's Mission 4/1 Earth!

“Mission 4/1 Earth: 50 Great Days” is about living boldly Jesus’ let-your-light-shine proclamation in the Sermon on the Mount: “That they may see your good works!” It is an opportunity to live out our faith — in unity, as one church — for the sake of our fragile planet Earth.

Launching on Easter Monday, April 1, 2013, and continuing through the 50 days of Eastertide, United Church of Christ congregations, colleges, seminaries, camps and outdoor ministries, and health and human service agencies will join together in a shared mission campaign to:

- ✿ Collectively offer more than ONE MILLION HOURS of engaged earth care, including clean up, advocacy, education, and behavioral changes that will impact the environment.
- ✿ Collectively plant more than 100,000 TREES locally and globally in partnership with the National Arbor Day Foundation and the UCC’s denominational partners around the world.
- ✿ Collectively write/send more than 100,000 ADVOCACY LETTERS on environmental concerns to elected officials and local and national newspapers.

Mission 4/1 Earth links together four significant events — Easter (March 31), Earth Day (April 22), Arbor Day (April 26) and Pentecost (May 19) — for a sustained, aggressive and collective mission opportunity for the entire United Church of Christ. Together, we will inspire and aspire to what we can accomplish as **ONE CHURCH**.

A continuously updated national tote board at ucc.org will keep the entire church apprised of our collective efforts at ucc.org/earth.

Groups are encouraged to engage in creative local mission projects, service opportunities, educational programs, worship services, and media events. Your innovation will spark momentum for the initiative and stir the imaginations of other UCC people, agencies, schools, and congregations.

How can my church/organization participate?

Here’s a sample checklist!

- ✿ Share the overarching concept of Mission 4/1 Earth with your church’s or institution’s appropriate leadership and ask for their explicit buy-in and support. Get it on the calendar!
- ✿ Convene a small Mission 4/1 Earth Implementation Group to set local goals and promote and coordinate your participation.
- ✿ Distribute 4/1 Earth Timecards (available at ucc.org/earth or by calling toll free at 800/537-3394) so that individuals in your church/institution are encouraged — ahead of time — to discern how each person will be involved in helping the UCC reach its big goal of 1 million hours of active earth care. (For a list of ideas about how to creatively donate time, see pages 8 and 9.) Ask people to return their timecards in the offering plate or, better yet, plan a consecration time when you bless and share individual ideas and commitments.

- ✿ Promote Mission 4/1 Earth with campaign materials, including posters, t-shirts, buttons, stickers, seed cards (ready for planting), bulletin inserts and more. Items can be purchased at ucc.org/earth. A campaign kit (comprised of 1 DVD promo ad, this manual, 1 poster, 100 bulletin inserts [2 inserts, 50 of each], 100 timecards, 25 buttons, 25 stickers, 10 seed cards and an order form) is available for purchase at ucc.org/earth.
- ✿ Discuss ways to integrate any existing Eastertide or springtime emphases with the coordinated churchwide vision of the Mission 4/1 Earth campaign.
- ✿ Plan how Mission 4/1 Earth will be launched and sustained in your community. How will the seven Sundays of Eastertide be utilized to build momentum, increase participation, ignite eco-learning, and serve as an all-important check-in time for accumulating earth-care hours?
- ✿ Playfully determine your piece of the overall national goal and set your own personal and congregational goals. How about planting one tree each day, at a different church member's home, for 50 days? Or partnering with a local farm to plant trees each weekend during the 50-day period? Why not adopt a riverbank or abandoned community lot for weekly clean ups? Brainstorm unique ways that people can contribute hours of active earth care in creative, engaging ways, especially by means that alter existing behaviors but don't necessarily require extra hours of added-on activity.
- ✿ Publicize and promote individual and collective goal setting and devise a strategy by which you will communicate and celebrate your local tally, in addition to the national tally. Timecards will be a great tool for collecting earth-care-hour tallies in your community. (See page 9.)
- ✿ Once your church has decided on its specific plans or goals, share them in advance at the "Tell us your plans" section of ucc.org/earth. Your stories will be lifted up across the entire UCC leading up to and during Mission 4/1 Earth.
- ✿ Designate at least one person in your congregation who will be responsible for tallying and reporting your church's participation. (See "How will the national tally process work?" page 10.)

When do we get started?

Although Mission 4/1 Earth is designed to be a 50-day collective mission emphasis across the whole United Church of Christ, you should begin now to prepare for how your individual members and congregation will participate. Effective planning is key to widespread participation, especially since Mission 4/1 Earth will include many different components: community clean ups, educational and advocacy opportunities, individual habit changes, tree planting, letter writing, and more. You'll have the most success if you work ahead and build momentum.

Reaching one million hours won't be easy, so we need people — ahead of time — to discern how they will participate. Plan a consecration time when you bless and share individual ideas and commitments. For a list of ideas about how to creatively donate time, see pages 8 and 9.

It's also important that you brainstorm unique ways that people can contribute hours of active earth care in creative, not-readily-apparent ways. Early on, you should provide opportunities for people to commit/covenant how they will be donating time and energy to Mission 4/1 Earth, then bless and celebrate these commitments even before Mission 4/1 Earth launches. Don't forget to share your plans at ucc.org/earth — your ideas might be the inspiration another congregation needs for its own successful campaign!

Why focus on the environment?

Scripture compels us to act on our faith, one that is grounded in wonder, reverence, love, and respect for all of God's creation. Genesis 1 says that when God created the heavens and the earth, God saw that everything was "very good." We learn in Genesis 2 that as humankind has the freedom to make moral choices, we also must take responsibility for the consequences of our personal actions and inactions. With the freedom of God's gift, the prophet Micah guides us towards moral and responsible lifestyle choices: we are to do justice, love kindness and mercy, and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:6-8).

But clearly, God's creation is groaning under the burden of injustice, greed, and arrogance. Our choices have resulted in vanishing and degraded farmland, air unfit to breathe and water unfit to drink, unsustainable energy processes and consumption, and the perilous immediate and long-term worldwide consequences of global warming and climate change. Poor communities and communities of color are disproportionately suffering the unjust consequences of our choices. And now, we realize more every day that our choices threaten the voiceless natural systems that sustain all of life itself.

When confronted with environmental responsibility, people of faith face a choice: to live in despair or to live with hope. We in the United Church of Christ are called to live with hope. We are called to spiritual and lifestyle transformation based on justice and reverence for all of God's creatures and creation. We are called by Jesus to love God and love our neighbor as ourselves. With God's grace, through Mission 4/1 Earth, we are inviting individuals, churches, schools, camps and human service agencies to be transformed into people and places of hope and restorative justice.

Mission 4/1 Earth is an opportunity to examine and change our patterns of behavior and to deepen our understanding and engagement of earth care and environmental justice in the process. While it's only 50 days, this all-church mission intensive will be a concerted effort, through thousands of small and big steps, toward ensuring a greener future for planet earth and a greener faith for us as followers of Jesus Christ.

Why Eastertide?

While Lent (the season before Eastertide) is traditionally a busy, program-rich time in many churches, Eastertide — as a season of spiritual growth and enrichment — has received less attention.

Utilizing Eastertide as the sacred and celebratory backdrop for "Mission 4/1 Earth," this-50-day campaign will serve as an active reminder that Easter is not one day, but 50 days of a single

joyful feast. While Easter begins on the Great Lord's Day, each Sunday of the season is treated as a Sunday of Easter. The 50th day of Easter is Pentecost.

Since Eastertide falls during the spring for northern-hemisphere Christians, it is a natural time to think about the Earth's regeneration and resurrection, just as we are exploring these theological themes in our spiritual lives as well.

How will we reach one million hours?

One million hours of active earth care is one BIG goal, and reaching/surpassing that impressive goal is going to take a concerted effort on the part of every UCC person. However, it's doable!

The important thing to remember is that there is no ONE way to contribute active earth-care hours, but it will involve intentionality as individuals and as a congregation. Remember, all of these actions can continue as ministries long after the 50 days of Mission 4/1 Earth are over.

Here are some examples:

- ✿ If you ride a bike, carpool, or use public transportation, instead of riding alone in a car, count that time toward the goal.
- ✿ Read a book or article, or watch a documentary, about the environment, and count that as time well spent. Organize a group of 10 friends to do the same, and multiply the earth-care time you're investing.
- ✿ Plant and tend an organic garden. Weeding and watering time will mount up quickly.
- ✿ Prepare a sermon. Lead a Bible study. Plan or attend an earth-care-focused worship service.
- ✿ Write advocacy letters, or staff a table to encourage others to do the same. (**Remember, letters count twice:** toward the 1 million hours goal AND the 100,000 letters goal!)
- ✿ Install energy efficient light bulbs or appliances.
- ✿ Recycle coffee grounds and old coffee by putting them/pouring them on acid-loving plants.
- ✿ Donate items to thrift shops and shop there, too.
- ✿ Create a compost bin at your church and/or your home.
- ✿ Turn out the lights in rooms you are not in.
- ✿ Hold a workshop for youth (and adults, too!). Teach them to weigh the amount of food they leave on their plates and set a goal to reduce the amount of food they throw away. Then track it.
- ✿ Donate plastic grocery bags to Goodwill, the Salvation Army or most second-hand shops.
- ✿ RECYCLE. Time spent collecting, sorting, and submitting recycled materials. If your city doesn't offer recycling, start a letter-writing campaign to urge them to start one.
- ✿ Work with your city or town to set up a recycling center in the church parking lot; or have church members volunteer to work at local recycling collection centers.

- ✿ Check all your faucets to make sure they don't drip.
- ✿ Wash clothes in cold water. Count 1 hour per load for the 50 days.
- ✿ Read the labels — use detergents that don't harm the environment.
- ✿ Recycle your old cell phone.
- ✿ Ask church members to donate one or more mugs to the church for coffee hour, rather than use paper. That way, you'll have enough for the members, and for visitors, too.
- ✿ Return/recycle empty toner and ink cartridges.
- ✿ Vinegar can be used for cleaning all sorts of things instead of harsh chemicals.
- ✿ Have several litter collection days where church members work in teams to pick up trash along roadsides and in parks.
- ✿ Reduce the number of church bulletins and/or newsletters that your church prints.
- ✿ Learn ways to live green via online eco-blogs.
- ✿ Many documentaries address various issues about our planet. Arrange video discussion nights to watch a video and then discuss it. Here are just a few to choose from: "Renewal," "Food, Inc.," "Fresh," "Troubled Waters (produced by the United Church of Christ)," "Peaceable Kingdom," "Strong Roots, Fragile Farms (produced by the United Church of Christ)," "The End of the Line," "Dirt," "No Impact Man," "Home," "An Inconvenient Truth," and "What's On Your Plate."
- ✿ Plant a tree in your back yard.
- ✿ Use only organic fertilizer on your lawn this spring.
- ✿ Use a manual lawnmower (you'll be cutting down on noise pollution, too!)
- ✿ Walk to the store, to church, to school, the park, the post office, the library, the cleaners — any short trips you normally use the car for.
- ✿ Research or attend workshops on shopping/buying local produce and health eating. Then shop health and eat healthy! Many people find that adopting a locally-grown diet helps both their own health and their neighbors.

What are Mission 4/1 Earth timecards?

For use throughout Mission 4/1 Earth, timecards are pew card size and can be either put in quantities in the pews and/or distributed ahead of time. Members fill out the cards, noting the hours of active earth care, trees planted (or donated toward) and letters written. Each Sunday, members can turn in their filled-in timecards — either in the offering plate, or during a special section of the service when they are blessed or otherwise celebrated. Ask visitors to tally hours they've spent in active earth care, too!

One person (or a team of persons) should be responsible for tallying the information from the timecards and reporting online at ucc.org/earth.

A packet of 100 timecards is part of the Mission 4/1 Earth kit, and individual packs of 100 timecards also are available (free — just pay shipping).

The kit, along with extra timecards, can be ordered ordered at ucc.org/earth or by calling 800/537-3394.

How will the national tally process work?

Starting Easter Sunday (March 31, 2013), the UCC's website <ucc.org> will be converted into an online national tote board. There you will find regularly updated totals for the number of volunteer hours contributed, trees planted, and letters written.

Mission 4/1 Earth timecards (see above) are available for individual use in every local church. During each Sunday of Eastertide, ask members and visitors to drop envelopes reporting their work into the offering plate.

At the UCC's homepage, you will be asked to report your tally, either on behalf of yourself alone or on behalf of others (group or congregation). Please return often to report additional counts as they happen.

Don't forget the media!

Utilize Mission 4/1 Earth as an opportunity to engage your local media. Share what your church is doing and how it's part of a collective effort of 5,100 UCC congregations nationwide.

Remember: The more creative and clever your approach to Mission 4/1 Earth, the more likely it will garner local, regional, or even national media attention.

Think outrageous. Do something visual. TV cameras crave action. Remember that all these things count as earth-care hour activities!

- ✿ How about piling collected recyclables in a visible public space that will pique curiosity and inspire participation? Why not partner with a local recycling program or waste treatment operation in your community?
- ✿ How about a teach-in on environmental racism?
- ✿ How about a worship service atop a landfill?
- ✿ Can you partner with a local "green" company to promote Mission 4/1 Earth?
- ✿ What about devising your own local tote board outside your church so that passersby will see your church's participation?
- ✿ How about organizing a community clean-up day, a riverbank sweep, or recycling drive with all participants wearing Mission 4/1 Earth t-shirts or buttons?
- ✿ What about a mass community service project?

- ✿ Invite your U.S. senator or member of Congress to appear with you at a press conference announcing Mission 4/1 Earth?
- ✿ The only limit is your imagination!

If you would like assistance with your congregation's media engagement strategy for Mission 4/1 Earth, contact Connie Larkman, the UCC's news director, at <larkmanc@ucc.org> or 216-736-2196.

Join us on Facebook and Twitter!

Find Mission 4/1 Earth on Facebook and click the "I'm attending" button to begin receiving periodic updates whenever new information, materials and resources are available. Post the creative ideas from your church to inspire other congregations' participation.

What resources are available?

An expanding library of downloadable resources is available at ucc.org/earth. It includes Bible studies, sermon starters, mission moments and facts on the environment. Graphic elements also are available.

Campaign materials — including t-shirts, stickers, buttons, posters, bulletin inserts, timecards, seed cards and more — are available for purchase at ucc.org/earth, as well as a Mission 4/1 Earth campaign kit that includes this manual, a DVD promo ad, 100 bulletin inserts and timecards; 1 poster; 10 seed cards, 25 buttons, 100 stickers and an order form.

If you produce your own Mission 4/1 Earth materials (e.g., sermons, devotions or educational curricula) that might benefit other congregations, please submit them to Barb Powell at <powellb@ucc.org>.

How can we engage in advocacy and letter writing?

Over the 50 days of the Mission 4/1 Earth campaign we will lift our voices together by writing more than 100,000 advocacy letters on environmental concerns to elected officials and local and national newspapers. Each email and written letter counts toward our goal of shouting out for the environment!

We've compiled a number of sample letters and resources to support your advocacy efforts. Throughout the campaign, new materials will be added online at www.ucc.org/earth/advocacy.html.

Questions? Check out our advocacy frequently asked questions at <http://www.ucc.org/earth/advocacy-faqs.html>.

Sample Alerts

Take Action on Climate Change!

In 2007, delegates of the 26th General Synod passed a resolution on climate change that called the global warming crisis “one of the most urgent threats to humankind and, indeed, all of God’s precious planet earth.” This resolution called on all of us in the United Church of Christ to urge our national government leaders “to respond to global warming with great urgency and firm leadership by supporting mandatory measures that reduce the absolute amount of greenhouse gas emissions.”

We understand that scripture compels us to act on our faith grounded in wonder, reverence, love, and respect for all of God’s creation. Overwhelmingly scientific evidence indicates that global warming is reducing the diversity and beauty of God’s great earth through extinction of plants and animals. The impact on human life is equally severe. Our changing climate will impact our poorest and most vulnerable brothers and sisters the hardest. Many will lose their homes, crops, and livelihoods to increasingly volatile weather and rising seas.

As individual people of faith, we can power down our households and green up our communities, but 2013 will be the year when shouting out to our lawmakers can have its greatest impact. Tell your elected officials at every level to take climate change seriously as a moral imperative for change.

Learn more about climate change: <http://bit.ly/climatebackground>

Date _____

Dear Senator _____ or Representative _____,

As a constituent and a member of _____ congregation of the United Church of Christ, I am writing to you today to ask that you lead the way in the fight against climate change. Scientists agree that significant and immediate action is needed if we wish to avoid the worst effects: increasingly severe weather, rising sea levels, melting glaciers and ice caps, record rates of extinctions, droughts, floods, and other changes that will transform our planet into a more hostile place.

It is time to take legislative action to transition the nation to more sustainable energy and a significantly smaller carbon footprint. The climate bill introduced by Senators Sanders and Boxer (S. 332) is one example of a way forward, but any legislative solution must:

- Enact stricter emissions standards for all fossil fuels;
- Support development of cleaner energy such as wind, solar, and geothermal alternatives;
- Stop subsidizing the fossil fuel industries, including tar sands oil, “fracking” of oil and natural gas, and coal.

As a person of faith, I believe we are called to be good stewards of all creation and to live sustainably so that there will be something left for our children, grandchildren, and many generations beyond them. The longer we delay in taking significant action, the more we put in peril the very existence of future generations.

We can and must do better. There are already many individuals and groups working within our community to combat climate change, including efforts within my local church community. But we need strong laws to enable systemic transformation of our energy infrastructure.

Thank you for your attention to this issue. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Take Action: Protect Bristol Bay!

Bristol Bay, Alaska, is a wild, largely unspoiled eco-system. Over a half a million square miles of rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands support the largest remaining wild salmon populations and habitat on earth. Millions of salmon return to their spawning grounds in the pristine waters of the bay each year. In turn, the salmon nourish the ecosystem and support a sustainable human economy that provides 14,000 full and part time jobs and is valued at \$480 million annually. The native peoples of the region depend on the salmon for sustenance and during the annual salmon run fill their freezers and smokehouses for the coming year.

Currently the EPA is considering a proposal to mine gold, copper and other minerals in the heart of Bristol Bay, known as Pebble Mine.

In order to extract billions of tons of raw ore from the earth, an enormous open pit, two miles across and 2,000 feet deep, would be gouged into the ground. Billions of tons of mine waste would be dumped into man-made lakes created by flooding 10 square miles of land behind earthen dams more than 600 feet high. Dangerous chemicals would be dumped into these lakes located in an active earthquake zone.

The environmental risks of this project are enormous, but equally important are the devastating repercussions the mine will have on Bristol Bay's indigenous peoples, who have lived on these lands for generations and depend on the bay's salmon for their survival. The practice of intentionally selecting communities of color for waste disposal sites and polluting industrial facilities – essentially condemning these communities to contamination – is known as “environmental racism.” The United Church of Christ has historically been a champion for environmental justice across the nation and it is essential that we join with our native sisters and brothers in speaking out about the very real impact this project will have on their lives and communities.

Learn more about Bristol Bay and Pebble Mine: <http://bit.ly/pebblemine>

The indigenous communities in the area, along with environmentalists, those who hunt and fish, and people of faith are all joining the chorus of voices calling on the Administration to protect the bay. Send a letter to the President now!

Date _____

Dear President Obama,

I call on you to protect the environment and the people of Bristol Bay, Alaska from the environmentally dangerous proposal to build a huge open pit mine known as Pebble Mine.

This gold and copper operation would generate an estimated ten billion tons of waste and devastate the world's greatest wild salmon runs, the lynchpin of a spectacular American ecosystem and the generator of 14,000 jobs and \$480 million in annual revenue.

The environmental risks of this project are enormous, but equally important are the devastating repercussions the mine will have on the indigenous peoples of Bristol Bay, who have lived on these lands for generations and depend on the bay's salmon for their survival. More than 80 percent of Bristol Bay residents -- including its Native peoples and commercial fishermen -- oppose this project and have asked your Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to stop the mine.

The EPA conducted a comprehensive study, confirming that the Pebble Mine would pose "catastrophic" risk to this irreplaceable natural treasure.

I urge you to act swiftly and decisively on those findings. Please direct your EPA to use its authority under the Clean Water Act to stop the Pebble Mine.

For the sake of this and all future generations of Americans, I urge you reject this assault on our natural heritage.

Sincerely,

Take Action: Urge your Members of Congress to Include Conservation Compliance in the Farm Bill

Our farming practices have a major impact on the health of our environment. Every five or six years Congress writes a new Farm Bill, and they are working on a new one this year. The Farm Bill is the legislative package of federal farm and food legislation that sets the farm, food, and rural policy goals and priorities for our nation.

Basic conservation requirements to protect against soil erosion and wetland drainage have been a condition of receiving farm subsidies since 1985. This so-called “conservation compliance” policy has dramatically reduced soil erosion on farmland and protected wetlands, keeping land productive and natural resources intact. Unfortunately not all farms are required to comply with these standards.

Learn more about conservation compliance: <http://bit.ly/conservationcompliance>

Farm policies should support agricultural practices that are good for farmers, good for the environment, and good for America. Take action - urge your senators and representative to renew and strengthen the conservation compact between farmers and taxpayers by requiring conservation compliance for recipients of federal crop insurance.

Date _____

Dear Senator _____ or Representative _____,

As a constituent and a member of _____ congregation of the United Church of Christ, I am writing to you about the Farm Bill. Please vote to require conservation compliance for recipients of federal crop insurance.

Conservation compliance prevents soil erosion on farmland and protects wetlands, keeping land productive and natural resources intact. By requiring basic levels of protection for soil, water, and wetlands, the conservation compact between farmers and taxpayers can help ensure that where public money is invested, our interests are protected.

This is a responsible approach that protects the environment, levels the playing field for farmers who play by the rules, and saves taxpayers money. I strongly urge you to make conservation compliance a requirement of receiving federal crop insurance.

Thank you. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

DIY - Design your own advocacy campaign:

The most powerful advocacy campaigns are rooted in the issues that matter most to you and your community. Throughout the 50 days of Mission 4/1 Earth we will create a variety of sample letters and opportunities to engage in advocacy, but we encourage you to create your own actions that are unique to your community and congregation.

Here are some things to consider as you plan your advocacy efforts.

Developing an Advocacy Strategy

Before any advocacy campaign begins — before the letter-writing, petitions, or protests — advocates must have a clear strategy — an overall map of where you are, where you want to be, and how to get there. At its heart, an effective strategy is based on five key questions:

What Do You Want? (Objectives)

An advocacy campaign must begin with a clear sense of what you want to achieve. Your goal should be easily explainable and understood.

Who Can Give It to You? (Audiences)

The first question to ask is who has the authority to give you what you want. Is it Congress, the state legislature, your city council, your local school board, your local health department? Whoever it is, this is your primary audience. Second, who will most directly influence their decision-making? This could be the media, local business leaders, or other community groups. They also need to be a target of your advocacy efforts.

What Do They Need to Hear? (Message)

An advocacy campaign must have a message that is clear, true, persuasive and consistent for the audiences that the campaign has targeted. Advocates often make the mistake of believing that the most effective message is the most persuasive to themselves. What do your audiences think, and what will genuinely move them to your side? That message must be repeated, over and over again with clarity.

Whom Do They Need to Hear It From? (Messengers)

The same message will have a very different effect depending on who communicates it. In general, an advocacy campaign should have some messengers who have credibility as experts, some who can speak from personal experience, and others who have special credibility or connection to the person or group you have targeted.

How Can We Get Them to Hear It? (Delivery)

Advocacy campaigns can deliver their message in many different ways – from lobbying or letters to protest and direct action. Campaigns need to evaluate their options for action and weave the right ones together in a winning mix.

(Advocacy tips reprinted with permission of Democracy in Action, a newsletter of the Democracy Center, The Institute for Public Policy Advocacy, P.O. Box 22157, San Francisco, California 94122, 415-564-4767, www.democracyctr.org.)

Tips for Writing an Effective Letter

State your purpose for writing in the first sentence of your letter – identify the issue and make a specific request [e.g. “I urge you to support the Jubilee global debt cancellation bill”].

Identify yourself. Begin each letter or phone call by stating that you are a constituent. This will let the staffer know right away that they need to pay attention to your questions and concerns.

Be brief and focus on one issue per message.

Personalize your message – why does this matter to you? Use a story to illustrate the impact of a policy position.

Ask specific questions which may prompt something more than a form response.

Helpful Websites

U.S. House of Representatives: www.house.gov

U.S. Senate: www.senate.gov

Library of Congress: www.thomas.gov (*tracking legislation*)

Govtrack: www.Govtrack.us

(a civic project for finding information on legislation and members of Congress)



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