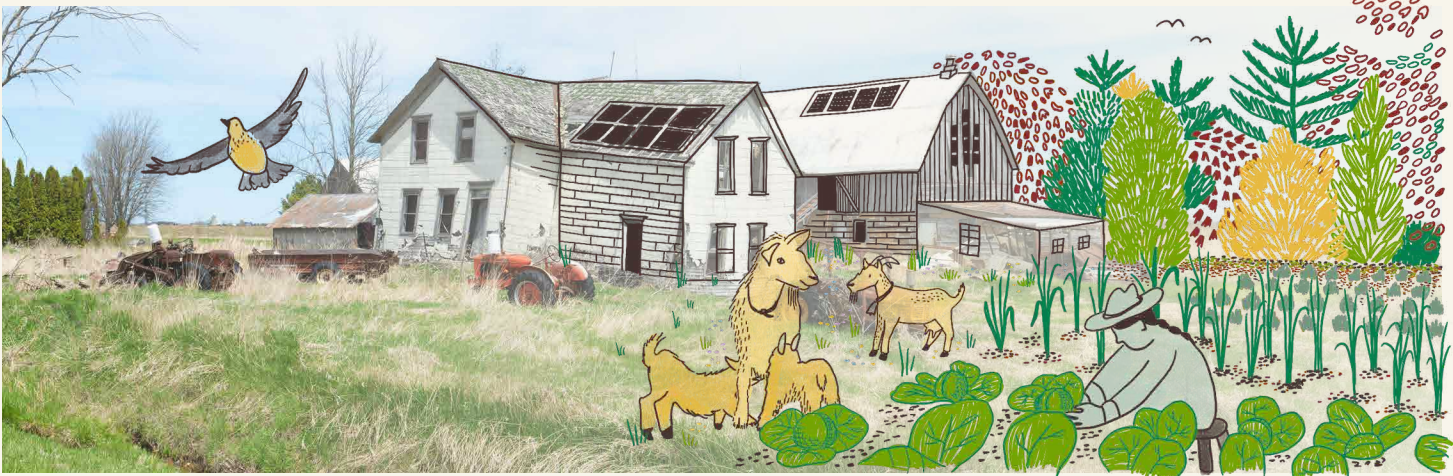


FAITHLANDS TOOLKIT

A Guide to Transformative Land Use



FAITHLANDS TOOLKIT

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Welcome to FaithLands, an initiative to engage faith communities in ecological stewardship and reparative justice through the land. FaithLands is an invitation to join us in envisioning a world where land held by religious institutions is transformed into sustainable gardens and farms for the greater good of the land and all who depend on its bounty for sustenance and well-being. We believe faith communities are uniquely positioned in community and in their theological foundations to look at the land they own—the grounds of the congregations, synagogues, mosques, and churches; the retreat centers and places of worship that rest on arable or ancestral land—and to ask, How could this land be used to honor our connection to all that is, and our role in supporting a vibrant community? What is the untold story of how this land came to be in our possession? What is its origin? From whom was it taken and from whom was it withheld?

FaithLands offers a space to ask and answer, How can we use this land to repair relationships, to redress the wrongs of our ancestors, to heal the life within the soil? And, what would be the most just use of this land?

The FaithLands Toolkit serves as a guide to support faith communities in considering their respective spiritual traditions linking those core values and beliefs to the land. Through case studies and thoughtful conversation, it offers ways to join a growing number of faith traditions in the production of food, the support of basic human needs, and the building of resilient communities while also promoting equity and justice through the land. As you delve into the toolkit, we invite you to keep in mind the questions posed in this introduction to better understand your faith community's opportunities to address this political, social, and environmental moment in ways that will honor your deepest beliefs and traditions.

Welcome to FaithLands!

WHAT IS FAITHLANDS?



The FaithLands initiative and this toolkit support partnerships between farmers, faith communities, and food systems in celebration of our interconnectedness to one another and our common home.

A growing number of faith communities are opening their lands to food production as part of a global movement toward resilience and renewal. Doing so deepens and enlivens the community's connection to each other, the source of all life, and humanity's greatest challenges. By partnering with faith groups, beginning farmers and farmers who have faced discrimination are gaining access to land and the ability to realize their visions of abundance.

Together, with the support of the [FaithLands initiative](#), faith communities and farmers are increasing food security, regenerating landscapes, building climate resilience, and repairing racial, economic, and social injustice.

Faith leaders seeking to **engage community members in making land available to farmers**

Faith leaders seeking to **engage their communities in reconciliation, reparative justice, and land return**

Faith groups interested in **starting a community garden or other land-based enrichment opportunity for their members**

Members of faith communities **seeking models for land justice and land stewardship** to share with their leaders and congregations

Members of faith communities **seeking tools to persuade their leadership** to implement faithlands projects

Individuals **seeking models for righting wrongs to land and people**

Communities and individuals seeking inspiration, information, and resources for **supporting farming, gardening, and ecological renewal on their land**

Farmers interested in **engaging a faith community in a land access partnership**

Organizations and individuals who provide land access assistance to farmers and **want help thinking through how to approach a faith community**

WHO SHOULD USE THIS TOOLKIT?

WHY SHOULD MY FAITH COMMUNITY THINK ABOUT LAND?

Land is the source of life. Without land, and without those who farm it, there can be neither ceremony nor food. Anyone who eats, anyone who prays, anyone who lives from the earth should be thinking about land.

Land has a history. For every tale of settlement, there is a tale of dispossession; for every tale of wealth, there is a tale of labor. The land carries these stories. Redressing historic wrongs—actions in contradiction to the central tenets of ethical and spiritual teachings—requires a truthful reckoning with the land’s history.

Land has a future. Reconnecting with land and agriculture, and enabling others to reconnect with and access land for farming and ceremony, is crucial to protecting the future of the land and all who live from it.

Landowning congregations, communities, and individuals can:

Lease land to farmers or farming organizations.

Donate land (or proceeds from the sale of land) to farmers or farming organizations.

Return land to dispossessed peoples.

Partner with a land trust or other qualifying organization to protect land, and/or to make land accessible for farming or other land-based practices.

Start their own sustainable farm or gardening projects.



All congregations, communities, and individuals can:

Support farmers and land-based organizations in their local communities and nationally.

Advocate for sustainable land stewardship, equitable land access, and land justice.

WHAT ROLE CAN WE PLAY?

Envision and set goals focused on a specific project.

Find inspiration in the work other faith communities are doing.

Connect land and justice to spiritual practice and read teachings from diverse faith and farm leaders.

Learn more about specific models or approaches, such as leasing to a farmer or partnering with a land trust.

Explore the advantages, challenges, and considerations for particular strategies or approaches.

Discover prospective partners.

HOW SHOULD WE USE THIS TOOLKIT?



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