



Communities of faith responding to climate change

March 2013

My name is Hannah, and I am an average middle schooler in central Pennsylvania. From April 5-9, I am taking part in a bike ride to Washington DC to speak with congressional representatives about climate change. Please let me introduce myself and tell you why I am doing this.

Starting at a young age, I was surrounded by bikes. Thinking back I can't remember a day when our garage was void of bicycles. When I was about nine, my father decided that we as a family would ride more miles on our bikes than we drove in the car. This of course was established after the purchase of our BBT – the bicycle built for two. In the years to come the BBT became my personal carriage to summer camp, after school activities, and the swimming pool.

For the second year Pennsylvania Interfaith Power & Light is hosting a ride from State College down to Washington DC, and I'm going along to talk to congress representatives about the need to do something about climate change and the healing of the earth. Last year, doing a ride like this looked like a challenge to me, something I could probably never do. But that was last year, and recently I've been fueled in my belief for a better future. ***I want an earth to inherit, filled with trees and clean water.*** I want to be able to breathe when I grow older, rather than be smothered by the toxins in the air. And so this year I decided I wanted to make that ride, and will do it with my father on the BBT.

I would like to invite you to ride with us in spirit. This is an invitation for you to jot down a letter, a prayer, or drawing that expresses your hopes and wishes for the healing of our damaged earth. I will bring these with me to Washington and present them to the representatives there. This is a chance for you to show everybody how much you care about this world, and how much you want to help. But more importantly, this is a chance to be heard.

Thank you,
Hannah Ballenger.

P.S. Here is the letter I wrote to share with our congressional representatives:

Dear Member of Congress,

Sometimes things need fixing, but it's not as easy as slapping a band-aid on the wound and saying "There, now we're all set." I think the hardest type of fixing is the kind when you know you've done the wrong, and know you have to fix it somehow, someday, or you know it won't stop bothering you. It's a humble act to fix something you broke, and it's not the easiest, especially when that something looked durable, and you just had to test how far it would go. Our earth has been harmed because of the byproducts of our over-consumerism, it's pretty clear. This year almost all of the previous drastic weather records have been broken, including extreme forest fires in Australia, and unbearable cold in Russia. Is it enough to recycle a bottle or two, or should more drastic measures be taken?

My vision for the healing of the earth is this: I hope that by the time I have children, our world will be sustainable. Although I fear our climate may never truly be the same, we may be able to stop the increase of temperatures. I wish that then, humans won't be so focused on their electronics, that we can look up into the smiling face of somebody we love and say "I'm so happy to be here with you." I hope not to see trash when glancing down at the road. But most of all, I pray for bicycles to fill the streets, riders waving in friendly recognition. I want factories to be greener, and maybe people will be more mindful of what ends up in the dumpster, but in the end, I want to see more and more bikes on my way to school, or to the store. I want to be one of those bicyclists pedaling toward a better world, one mile at a time.



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Hannah wants to collect **prayers for the Earth from all over Pennsylvania** and take them with her *by bicycle* to show our lawmakers in her office visits in Washington, DC. She is especially interested in prayers from other kids, but grownups can join in, too.

I'm sending my prayer with Hannah!

My first name: _____ My age: _____

My faith community: _____ My zip code: _____

My prayer:

We continue to pray for Creation individually and in our faith communities. By sharing your prayer with Hannah, you have supported her ride, and will help demonstrate to our lawmakers how many people's prayers will be with them when they stand up to act on climate change.

Return by April 3 to:

PA IPL 414 E. McCormick Ave. State College, PA 16801