



Welcome and Hello!

On this winter solstice, the darkest night of the year, we will create a web of collective energy and shared dreaming of a world where water is sacred, Native treaty rights are respected, and wealth is invested in communities and in sustainable working class jobs.

This solstice prayer invitation originated because the Native and Indigenous women leading the front line struggle to stop Line 3 asked Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light to organize an event that could engage people from all over Minnesota and beyond. This moment of solidarity and presence is particular to the solstice — a time that many traditions consider especially meaningful and that many of us mark as an opportunity to welcome the beauty and gentle possibility of winter darkness.

Since those first prayers at the river, we have had an incredible year of resistance and building community. Thousands joined the movement during the summer of 2021, praying and learning and resisting together. The energy of that movement continues and will deepen and grow in the years to come. We are hoping to make it an annual practice to gather on the solstice so that we can remember and reconnect with the water that gives us life.

Some of you who are participating may be doing so as part of faith, religious, or spiritual community — perhaps even gathering outdoors with a group. Others may be participating as individuals, who are nonetheless interconnected with the broader world of which we are all a part. You may be out in the world near a body of water, or settled inside a dwelling.

However you are arriving, you are very much welcome.

As you prepare for this moment of solidarity, notice the land around you and the earth that holds and supports you. If you are not Native or Indigenous to the geography on which you find yourself, learn the names of the Native or Indigenous people who live and have lived where you are. Give thanks to those who have stewarded and who continue to steward the well-being of the land.

How to Use This Guide

This guide provides you with a template for planning or engaging in a Water and Stars Solstice Solidarity action. We have written it as a *starting place* for people from many different faiths, traditions, religions, and spiritual practices, and for those who do not identify in this way.

You'll notice it is not particularly directive or full of set or explicit instructions. It invites openness and exploration into what feels most meaningful for you in connecting to and co-creating this shared web of Water and Stars.

At core, we are asking everyone who participates to connect to their breath, connect to water, and offer a spiritual intention towards the work of building a world rooted in care for the planet and care for one another.

We would especially love it if you could take pictures or a video as you go. You can email them to julia@mnipl.org. You can also post on social media. Please tag Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light ([Facebook](#) / [Twitter](#)), and use the hashtag #solsticewater.

We are here, separately but together, because we share a commitment to bringing our full spiritual selves to the work of climate justice. As you think about what that might mean for you and how you might want to integrate elements from your own life into your solidarity action, it can be helpful to begin with some basic elements.

For the purposes of this action, we offer you these three points of grounding:

Breath ~ Water ~ Action



Breath

Let your breath deepen and bring into your heart and mind the reason you're doing this. Why do *you* personally care about climate justice? Is it about water? Land rights? The climate? Is it about things that happened in the past, what's happening now, or what could happen in the future? Ground yourself in your reasons for doing this action. Let those reasons take shape in your heart and in your mind.

Imagine winning the fight to stop all destructive oil pipelines everywhere. Imagine elected officials and public decision-makers who prioritize justice, understand that racial justice and climate justice are intertwined, and embrace large-scale transformation towards a sustainable world and an equitable, renewable economy where all can prosper. Imagine a world that honors Native land and Native sovereignty. What does the world look like when we win? Who else is around? What does it feel like? Let your imagination get as big as it wants to, knowing that it's ok at any size and scale.

Invite your physical self to breathe in and then breathe out. Notice the sensation of air filling your lungs in all directions and then flowing back outward into the universe. Are there teachings about breath from a tradition or practice that feels meaningful to you or might support you in this moment? What sensations flow through you as you bring attention to the act of breathing? Where in your breath might you be holding tension and where might you find release?

Water

Water is sacred. [Mní Wičóni](#). Water is life.

If you are outdoors and able to access a body of water, notice the water itself — its color, its stillness or movement, what energy it evokes, its resonance. Use your senses to welcome the water into your body and into your spirit.

If you are indoors, find a tangible way to create a connection with water. For example, you might fill a special bowl or cup with water. As you do so, you might recite a prayer, poem, or spiritual teaching, inviting our shared hopes towards justice or liberation or repair to enter with the flow of the water.

If you have a connection to a faith, religion, or spiritual practice, think about what your tradition teaches about water. Is there a story that comes to mind? A set of words? A memory or a connection to ritual?

Bring an intention into your mind. Visualize the words and shape and feeling of that intention. Let the energy of your intention come into your body as a physical thing. Ask the water if it will help hold that intention with you as you mark this time.

Action

For some, this solstice action might be a moment in which you feel called to pray, or to engage in a concrete observance rooted in a faith or spiritual practice to which you have a direct connection. It might be a moment in which you want to bring in words that feel meaningful to you — words from poetry, sacred text, favorite passages, or words straight from your own heart. You may feel moved to sing, or to observe in silence. You may want to engage in all of the above.

Reconnect to your intention for this action. Feel the inhale and exhale of your breath, and remember what it felt like to imagine winning just a few moments ago. What arises for you as an authentic expression to live into your commitment to climate justice? What actions do you need to take personally? Who do you need to be with you? Who do you want to invite? What can you do to organize and inspire your community to take action with you? Let these images and feelings be your guide as you shape your plans for this solstice action. Let them ground and inspire you as you continue to take action as part of a vibrant and beautiful movement of community members, water protectors, people of faith, spirit, and conscience, and all of us who care about this amazing planet on which we live.

For additional centering and inspiration, you are invited to watch this [video from the Treaty People Gathering Faith Delegation](#).

A Gentle Note on Cultural Appropriation

As we seek meaning and connection in our communities and in our lives, some of us might find ourselves drawn to traditions or cultural practices to which we do not have a direct lived or historical connection, but which nonetheless resonate with our spirits and aspirations. We know that many of us hold multiple identities, and that access to privilege and dominance are always part of conversations about cross cultural practice. We therefore urge you to reflect on the distinction between appreciation of a tradition or cultural practice and an [inappropriate or harmful appropriation](#) of a tradition or cultural practice.

Appreciation might be in play when someone seeks to understand and learn about a tradition of cultural practice in an effort to broaden their perspective and connect with others. *Appropriation* happens when someone takes an aspect of a culture or tradition to which they do not have a direct or historical connection or commitment and uses it for their own personal interest, [spiritual fulfillment](#), or social or artistic gain. Appropriation is harmful, and we should all engage in reflection and consideration around whether we are part of that harm. We especially encourage you to pay attention to histories of race, colonization, and dominance when thinking about whether you are engaging in appropriation — [even when your intentions might be well meant](#).