

# CREATION CARE CONGREGATIONS

*"The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world and all who live in it." Psalm 24:1*

## Guidelines for implementing The Creation Care Program

**First step:** visit with your pastor and decision-making body of your church and request the formation of a Creation Care Team.

**Second step:** recruit team members who will commit to meeting regularly for learning and action.

Creation Care Churches should complete at least two activities in each of the four environmental areas listed. Examples of projects are given; however, action is not limited to these suggestions. Each section is focused, but all overlap to some degree. The resources section can provide many more specific ideas for participation.

## Environmental Witness

- Verbal or written proclamation citing the need to be a people involved in environmental stewardship in sermons, resolutions, and petitions
- Witness and speak before church groups, UMW, church school classes, youth groups, etc.
- Speak before community groups about environmental stewardship and appreciation of nature
- Present resolutions before the policy-making board of the church, such as requesting that energy-saving devices and/or light bulbs be utilized in the church building.
- Coordinate a letter to the editor campaign.
- Design a message about caring for creation to display on church property

## Environmental Education

- Make resources available that inform and nurture the congregation and people of the faith community. This could involve any church study curriculum, library materials, handouts included in the church bulletin and updates about efforts in state legislatures regarding the environment
- Submit articles to the church newsletter that encourage caring for creation
- Provide carbon footprint exercises for individuals and the church
- Have an environmental fair where materials could be given out to the congregation and/or community
- Invite and engage church youth to design educational posters to be displayed at church
- Sponsor a community forum to learn about local or state environmental issues

## Environmental Services

- Provide collection containers for recycling items in the church kitchen and office
- Participate in or organize environmental clean-up projects in the community
- Coordinate a church-wide composting project
- Coordinate a community garden and/or pollinator garden on church property
- Encourage gardening, participation in local farmers' markets and planting trees and shrubs which help wildlife and improve the environment for all
- Avoid using toxic and non-recyclable items for church events. Emphasize reusable instead of disposable. Purchase recycled products as much as possible.
- Provide a charging station at the church for electric cars
- Install bike racks on the church property.

## **Environmental Advocacy**

(this focuses on changing policies and systems to better care for creation)

Guide for advocacy from the United Methodist Social Principles

### **Political Responsibility**

The strength of a political system depends upon the full and willing participation of its citizens. The church should continually exert a strong ethical influence upon the state, supporting policies and programs deemed to be just and opposing policies and programs that are unjust.

<http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/political-community#relations>

**Note:** All advocacy should be aligned with the United Methodist Social Principles and The Book of Resolutions and needs to be issue-focused and nonpartisan.

- Coordinate conversations with public institutions in your community to see what efforts are being made to care for the environment. Out of those conversations, advocate for strengthening policies and practices (Example: recycling policy at the public schools)
- Coordinate a “call-in” day for church members to call state and/or national decision-makers on an environmental issue.
- Take action to support the household hazardous waste collection programs that exist. If none exists in your area, contact local leaders to encourage its formation.
- Regularly appear before governmental groups, i.e., city council, county commission, local utilities boards to promote waste management, recycling and sustainability efforts that reduce carbon emissions.
- Organize a letter-writing campaign after worship services at church providing sample letters and background information on a piece of state or national legislation.