

BEVERAGES AND BIBLES

“Nature is not a place to visit. It is home.”

- Gary Snyder

Introduction Question - Where have you always wanted to go on vacation?

**Question: Have you ever thought of the environment as a religious issue?
Why or why not?**

- “I want creation to penetrate you with so much admiration that wherever you go, the least plant may bring you the clear remembrance of the Creator...One blade of grass or one speck of dust is enough to occupy your entire mind in beholding the art with which it has been made.” - St. Basil the Great
- “I believe in my heart that faith in Jesus Christ can and will lead us beyond an exclusive concern for the well-being of other human beings to the broader concern for the well-being of the birds in our backyards, the fish in our rivers, and every living creature on the face of the earth.” - John Wesley
- “I love to think of nature as an unlimited broadcasting station through which God speaks to us every hour, if we will only tune in.” - George Washington Carver
- The growing possibility of our destroying ourselves and the world with our own neglect and excess is tragic and very real. - Billy Graham
- The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quiet, alone with the heavens, nature and God. Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be and that God wishes to see people happy, amidst the simple beauty of nature....I firmly believe that nature brings solace in all troubles. - Anne Frank

Question: Genesis 1:28 says, "God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." (NIV) In Hebrew, the word that is translated as rule over (רָדָה) can also be translated as have dominion over, rule over, and reign over. Does dominion, rule, and reign, mean that we can do whatever we want with the environment?

- "Do unto those downstream as you would have those upstream do unto you." - Wendell Berry
- "We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children." - unknown
- Since we reside on earth without claim to ownership, we are therefore tenants on God's land. As tenants, we do not have the right to act toward the earth in whatever manner we wish. Rather, we have an obligation to treat the land with the proper amount of respect due to its owner. - Nancy Sleeth

Question: in 1996, the Pew Research Center found that 48% of Americans believed global climate change was due to human, 31% believed that climate change was due to natural causes, and 20% believed that there was no evidence for climate change. The vast majority of scientists, 97%, agree that the primary cause of climate change is human activity. Why is there such a difference between scientists and the general public on the cause of climate change?

- "If you have men who will exclude any of God's creatures from the shelter of compassion and pity, you will have men who will deal likewise with their fellow men." - St. Francis of Assisi
- "When all the world appears to be in a tumult, and nature itself is feeling the assault of climate change, the seasons retain their essential rhythm. Yes, fall gives us a premonition of winter, but then, winter will be forced to relent, once again, to the new beginnings of soft greens, longer light, and the sweet air of spring." - Madeleine Kunin

- "Yes, our climates change. They've been changing ever since the earth was formed." - Rick Perry

Question: How do some of our cultural/materialistic values get in the way of caring for creation?

- "You shall not pollute the land in which you live.... You shall not defile the land in which you live, in which I also dwell; for I the LORD dwell among the Israelites." - Numbers 35:33-34
- "My grandmother has hundreds of axioms. One of them was 'If you think you want something, wait a month.' One of three things will happen if you follow this sage advice. One: You will forget. Two: You will no longer need it. Or three: You will need it more. Most often numbers one and two will happen." - Matthew Sleeth
- "Normal is getting dressed in clothes that you buy for work and driving through traffic in a car that you are still paying for - in order to get to the job you need to pay for the clothes and the car, and the house you leave vacant all day so you can afford to live in it." - Ellen Goodman
- "If money is your only measure of success, do not be surprised when it is all you have." - Wayne Gerard Trotman

Question: Climate change effects more than weather. Pollution causes health problems, while subsistence farmers face inconsistent yields due to unpredictable weather patterns, and extreme storms destroy communities. How should Christians respond to this suffering?

- "There is no task that is more urgent, more compelling or more sacred than that of protecting the climate of our planet for our children and grandchildren." - Christiana Figueres
- "In the end, our society will be defined not only by what we create, but by what we refuse to destroy." - John C. Sawhill
- "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; with me you are but aliens and tenants. Throughout the land that you hold, you shall provide for the redemption of the land." - Leviticus 25:23-24

- “We must learn to regard people less in the light of what they do or omit to do, and more in the light of what they suffer.” - Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Question: What individual and systematic changes will lead to creation care? What actions will you take?

- “...Science and religion, with their distinctive approaches to understanding reality, can enter into an intense dialogue fruitful for both... [The faith of Christians and other believers] can offer...ample motivation to care for nature and for the most vulnerable of their brothers and sisters.” - Pope Francis
- “In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.” - Margaret Atwood
- “Adopt the pace of nature: her secret is patience.” - Ralph Waldo Emerson
- “We need the tonic of wildness...At the same time that we are earnest to explore and learn all things, we require that all things be mysterious and unexplorable, that land and sea be indefinitely wild, unsurveyed and unfathomed by us because unfathomable. We can never have enough of nature.” - Henry David Thoreau
- “The Peace of Wild Things:
When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children’s lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.” - Wendell Berry

CLIMATE JUSTICE

FAITH & FACTS

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

What does the Bible say?

God saw everything that God had made and indeed, it was very good. **(Genesis 1:10)**

Praise God, you highest heavens. **(Psalm 148:4)**

There is no faithfulness or loyalty, and no knowledge of God in the land... The land mourns, and all who live in it languish; together with the wild animals and the birds of the air, even the fish of the sea are perishing. **(Hosea 4:1,3)**

The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers; the heavens languish together with the earth. The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed laws, violated the statutes, broken the ever-lasting covenant. **(Isaiah 24:4-5)**

If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. **(2 Chronicles 7:14)**



What does The United Methodist Church say?

All creation is the Lord's and we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse it. Water, air, soil, minerals, energy resources, plants, animal life and space are to be valued and conserved because they are God's creation and not solely because they are useful to human beings.

(Social Principles ¶160)

The adverse impacts of global climate change disproportionately affect individuals and nations least responsible for the emissions. We therefore support efforts of all governments to require mandatory reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and call on individuals, congregations, businesses, industries, and communities to reduce their emissions. **(Social Principles ¶160.D)**

As we continue to call for bold leadership and advocate for policies rooted in justice and sustainability, we understand that God is calling each of us to respond and that as a denomination we cannot hope to transform the world until we change our way of being in it. **(2016 Book of Resolutions, #1035, "Climate Change and the Church's Response")**

A transition to energy efficiency and renewable energy sources will combat global warming, protect human health, create new jobs, and ensure a secure, affordable energy future. **(2016 Book of Resolutions, #1001, "Energy Policy Statement")**



CHURCH & SOCIETY

The United Methodist Church

Living **FAITH** Seeking **JUSTICE** Pursuing **PEACE**

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

CLIMATE JUSTICE

What do the facts say?

- Carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping pollution, mainly from cars, power plants and other industrial sources that burn gasoline, coal and other fossil fuels, are collecting like a blanket in the atmosphere. (In the last century, carbon dioxide levels in our atmosphere increased by more than 25%.)
- Average global temperatures have increased by 0.8°C (1.4°F) since 1880. ¹
- Fifteen of the hottest sixteen years on record have occurred in the 21st Century and 2015 recorded the hottest global average surface temperatures ever – a full 1°C above pre-industrial levels. ²
- Scientific models predict a further temperature increase during this century of between 2°C and 7°C with further melting of the polar ice caps and a potential rise of global sea levels between one and two meters. ³
- By 2020, between 75 and 250 million people on the continent of Africa are projected to be exposed to increased water stress due to climate change. Worldwide, that number is projected to reach 1.8 billion by 2080. ⁴ By 2050, agricultural yields in Africa are expected to decline by as much as 35%.



1 NASA, 2 World Meteorological Association (WMO), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), 3 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 4 United Nations Development Programme

What do you say?

Take **ACTION** for justice...

Lower your impact and find ways to reduce your carbon footprint.

- Choose modes of transportation that reduce or eliminate your fossil fuel consumption.
- Use longer lasting CFLs or LEDs to reduce energy use and CO₂ pollution.
- Conserve energy: turn off the lights, reduce air conditioner use, and investigate using “green energy” such as wind or solar power.

Raise your voice: Contact your elected officials and urge them to address the global climate crisis now! Ask them to support investing in a clean energy future, reducing emissions and providing adaptation assistance for those struggling to survive in a changing climate.



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