

Caring for God's Creation: A Call to Action

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"The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it."—
Genesis 2:15 (NIV)

From the beginning, God entrusted humanity with the care of God's creation. While the focus often centers on humanity's responsibilities toward one another, the call and duty to care for the Earth is frequently overlooked.

[EarthKeepers](#) – a program overseen by the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church – equips United Methodists who are passionate about creation care with information and resources to develop ideas and projects that help churches reduce their negative impact on creation.

390 laity and clergy have become Commissioned Global Ministries EarthKeepers since 2016. Some of the most recent project ideas include: creating a non-profit to care for the environment, wildlife, and humanity; starting or enhancing creation care ministries in churches, communities, and annual conferences; solar energy production with congregations and communities; pollution prevention, reduction, and cleanup; church lands restoration and rewilding; community gardens and food insecurity; energy efficiency initiatives; as well as much more. You can join the Global Ministries Creation Care Network to read about these projects at <https://creationcare.umcmmission.org>.

For Rev. Marty Toepke-Floyd, senior pastor at First United Methodist Church in Jamestown, N.D., this mission is personal. His love for the environment began in childhood through scouting and learning how the world works. When he heard about the EarthKeeper training, he knew it was something he wanted to be part of.

"The training was hands-on. We developed our projects alongside staff, working through an incubation process to refine our ideas," Marty explained.

Marty's project focuses on gathering data from local churches to assess how environmental concerns influence their decisions and ministries. His goal is to present his findings at Annual Conference and launch a Conference Green Team.

The Conference Green Team would help local churches establish their own Green Teams and guide them in making environmentally responsible decisions. It would also assist the Annual Conference in addressing climate justice issues. Marty hopes to find at least six individuals to join him in this effort, helping believers integrate environmental stewardship into their spiritual practices.

To Marty, being an EarthKeeper means "having a consciousness about the environment. Caring for the Earth. Caring for creation. Being aware that I'm a steward, not an owner." "Even if your local church doesn't have a Green Team, you can still make choices that benefit the environment," Marty added.

One way to promote environmental awareness is through [Creation Care Sundays](#)—incorporating themes and ideas about God's gifts in nature into worship and discussion. Holding services outdoors and reflecting on creation can spark meaningful conversations within a congregation.

The Creation Justice Movement offers a variety of resources for churches looking to integrate creation care into their ministries. Learn more at umcreationjustice.org.

While eco-friendly practices can also be cost-effective, Pastor Marty emphasizes that genuine creation care is about more than just recycling or using reusable dishes.

"Those are good first steps, but the real question is: 'Why is this a spiritual discipline?'

It's about connecting theology to our work, not just saving money," said Rev. Toepke-Floyd.

Pastor Marty believes that caring for creation is inseparable from discipleship.

"You cannot be a disciple of Jesus Christ and not care about the creation that God has called good," shared Pastor Marty.

As followers of Christ, we are called to sustain God's creation so that future generations can continue to experience its beauty.



Global Ministries **EARTHKEEPERS**

umcmmission.org/earthkeepers

SPRING ONLINE TRAINING
MAY 2-17, 2025



Global Ministries
The United Methodist Church

Global Ministries will be offering another EarthKeepers training May 2-17, 2025. This spring training is a fully online project incubator where you will receive training in eco-theology, antiracism, community organizing, and project planning. All participants plan a project during the training. The training consists of independent study and preparation in April, then three large group plenary sessions, two small group sessions, and a coaching session, all on Zoom in May. You must be a member or active participant in a United Methodist Church in the United States and committed to completing the full training. Applications for this training are being received until March 14.

Find out more details and apply at <https://umcmmission.org/earthkeepers> or email questions to environment@umcmmission.org.

If you'd like to learn more about Green Teams in the Dakotas or how to get involved, contact [Marty Toepke-Floyd](mailto:Marty.Toepke-Floyd) via email.

There will also be opportunities to learn about creation care and justice during this year's [Annual Conference](#) gathering June 6-8 in Mitchell, S.D.