

The Green Church Initiative Covenant  
of the  
Virginia Conference  
of the  
United Methodist Church

“All creation is the Lord’s, and we are responsible for how 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 creations and not solely because they are useful to human beings. God has granted us stewardship of creation. We should meet these stewardship duties through acts of loving care and respect. Economic, political, social, and technological developments have increased human numbers and lengthened and enriched our lives. However, these developments have led to regional defoliation, dramatic extinction of species, massive human suffering, overpopulation, and misuse and overconsumption of natural and nonrenewable resources, particularly by industrialized societies. This continued action jeopardizes the natural heritage that God has entrusted to all generations. Therefore, let us recognize the church's and its members' responsibility to prioritize changes in economic, political, social, and technological lifestyles to support a more ecologically equitable and sustainable world leading to a higher quality of life for all of God’s creation.” (United Methodist Social Principles Paragraph 160 *Book of Discipline 2004*)

The United Methodist Church realizes and affirms the responsibility of every United Methodist to care for God’s creation. We are called to participate in the redemption of individuals and all of humanity and the healing of the Creation itself. Therefore, ministries encouraging care for God’s creation are significant in our mission as United Methodists.

To carry out this calling, the congregation's members, as represented by our Administrative Council, affirm the importance of healing and defending God’s creation to our mission as a local congregation. We promise to be engaged in this ministry in the following ways:

### I. Worship

In worship, we will celebrate God’s grace, glory, and beauty in creation and will declare that “The Earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof!” (Psalm 104) We will connect our faith and our role as a member of the community of God’s creation. Our worship will motivate us to seek God’s reign on earth by cherishing, protecting, and healing creation.

### II. Learning and Teaching

We will seek opportunities for ourselves and our children to learn more about God’s creation and our role in it. Through the use of Scripture, experience, reason, and tradition, we will appreciate the interconnectedness and interdependency of all the different aspects of God’s creation, such as plants, people, other animals, rivers, oceans, and mountains. In our studies, we will expect to become aware of the extraordinary beauty and wonder of God’s creation, the threats posed by human beings to the survival of the planet, ways in which we can participate in its restoration, and changes we can make to our lifestyles to prevent further degradation and depletion of earth’s resources.

### III. Lifestyle

We will reflect respect and care for God's creation in our individual and congregational way of life. We will commit to making changes in our lives that will enable future generations to experience, as we have, the fullness of creation.

IV. Community, National, and Global Involvement

We will look for signs of creation’s groaning (Romans 8:22) in our community and take the necessary steps to alleviate its suffering. In our society, the nation, and the world, we will witness and participate in God’s ongoing work of creation by supporting public efforts and policies that protect and restore the damaged earth. We will open our hearts to God’s people worldwide who have been adversely affected by our greed. As United Methodists, we have embraced God’s people worldwide as our mission. We will also broaden that mission to include other parts of God’s creation.

The annual review of this covenant will assess the previous year’s work and consider other ways to participate in God’s redemption of creation.

Signed by the pastor, the administrative council/board chairperson, the chairperson of the mission committee, and the trustees' chairperson.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Church/District

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mission Committee Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Trustees Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Administrative Council Chair

Please return a signed copy of this form to:  
Brain Christoffersen  
VA Conference Creation Justice Team  
4120 Weeping Willow Ct.  
Chantilly, VA 20151

Or email [redceltic2010@gmail.com](mailto:redceltic2010@gmail.com)

(Note: If you or your church desires assistance meeting these goals or needs help getting started, etc., please call Brian Christoffersen, Chair of the Virginia Conference Creation Justice Ministry Team, 703-606-2665, [redceltic2010@gmail.com](mailto:redceltic2010@gmail.com). A *great* resource to help you get started is the *Greening Congregations Handbook*, available for you to order from [www.earthministry.org](http://www.earthministry.org).)