

## news release

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### **United Methodist Council of Bishops Embraces Climate Action**

***Bishops commit to first-of-its-kind training as important initial step toward effective climate advocacy and environmental justice***

***Actions align with the United Methodist Church's ongoing climate stewardship and pledge to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050***

**September 1, 2026** – The United Methodist Council of Bishops is taking foundational steps to address the climate crisis by commissioning and participating in a comprehensive, new training course titled **Speaking Up for Climate Action**, specifically designed for United Methodist Church (UMC) leaders at the bishop level. In doing so, the Council is preparing its members to take a leadership role in protecting and healing our relationship with God's good creation.

"All United Methodists are called to be diligent stewards of God's divine handiwork," said Rev. Pat Watkins, one of the members of the UM Creation Justice Movement planning team. "Bishops especially have a unique capacity to speak prophetically, build structures in their conferences, advocate for change and inspire action. It is our hope that this training will help our bishops lead with conviction and be a stronger voice for climate justice."

[Speaking Up for Climate Action](#) will take place online on Sept. 18. It is being developed by [The United Methodist Creation Justice Movement](#) in collaboration with [Garrett's Center for Ecological Regeneration](#).

This training follows the Council of Bishops' response to the United Methodist Creation Justice Movement's [Open Letter to the Council of Bishops](#), issued in the fall of 2025. The Council responded with a [strong statement of commitment](#) to climate action and climate justice on behalf of the whole church. Early in 2026, the Justice and Reconciliation Leadership Team of the Council of Bishops invited Movement leaders to develop a training to help bishops live into the commitments made by The United

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Methodist Church, including [the church's pledge to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050](#) across ministries, facilities, operations and investments.

"It's gratifying to witness the Council's commitment to climate renewal and more sustainable approaches," said the Rev. Sharon Delgado of the United Methodist Creation Justice Movement. "Because bishops are on the front lines of climate change impacts, their influence is critical, and we're pleased to partner with them on this unique approach to ongoing education and training."

Speaking Up for Climate Action will include testimonies from several bishops about their experiences and insights. The training will ground bishops in the current realities and conversations taking place about climate change and inspire and encourage bishops to open their imaginations to ways they can facilitate faithful action for climate stability and climate justice throughout the global church.

The two-hour session, including presentations by several climate leaders, will also incorporate current updates in climate science and climate justice impacts, theological resources from our Wesleyan tradition, research on effective climate communication, and inspirational examples of climate action with a particular focus on United Methodist and other faith-based contexts. A recording will be made more widely available following the online event.

### **About the United Methodist Creation Justice Movement**

The mission of the United Methodist Creation Justice Movement is to participate with the Spirit of God in connecting and supporting groups within the United Methodist Church and beyond for the work of creation care, justice and regeneration. Learn more and join our newsletter at [umcreationjustice.org](https://umcreationjustice.org).

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